The Mission Practices of New Church Congregations in Manchester City Centre

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Master of Philosophy by

John Benedict Edson

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Abstract

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John Benedict Edson

Religious practices, which are increasingly being perceived as the bearers of the religious tradition, reflect and then shape the theology of the tradition of which they are a part. This thesis examines the mission practices of two different, yet growing, church congregations in Manchester city centre by asking what can be learnt from their practices in mission.

Throughout the thesis different missiological themes and mission practices emerge from the two congregations as a response to the same postmodern, urban space of Manchester city centre. This difference, in themes and practices, is particularly notable regarding bounded and centred practices and the prioritisation of poiesis, theoria and praxis.

In King's Church, the first congregation researched, the notion of boundedness is identified as the most significant factor in their identity. This is reflected in their mission practices, which are shaped by their bounded ecclesiology, eschatology and pneumatology. It is from this boundedness that an eschatological ecclesiology becomes apparent and boundary crossing mission practices develop. This eschatological ecclesiology prioritises theoria, and hence their mission practices prioritise theoria above praxis and poiesis.

In contrast, centred mission practices are identified in the second congregation, Sanctus1. Their synthetic approach to the city centre is dialogical and hence the ecclesiology and mission practices that develop are shaped by both the culture of the city centre and their religious tradition. Alongside the centeredness of their mission practices, a prioritisation of poiesis can be discerned as mission is approached in an innovative and oblique way.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

Signed:

Date:

This thesis contains 60,609 words.

Abbreviations

CMI: Covenant Ministries International

IRA: Irish Republican Army

NOS: Nine O'clock Service

R1: Restorationism 1

R2: Restorationism 2

UK: United Kingdom

USA: United States of America

Nature of Study

This is a study into the mission practices of two different church congregations in Manchester city centre. The two congregations are King's Church, Manchester – a restorationist church – and Sanctus1 – a fresh expression of church, or an emerging church. The research can be located within the discipline of practical theology and in particular the field of congregational studies.

I use an ethnographic research method as I seek to answer my central question: 'What can be learnt from the mission practices of new church congregations in Manchester city centre?' To enable a fuller answer to this question, where the subtle nuances in mission practices are recognised and engaged with, I approach both congregations through four sub-questions, which enable me to achieve the theoretical saturation that the research methodology seeks.

The ethnographic research is supported by a study into the background of both congregations and into the wider narrative and theology of the movements with which they are associated. Following the ethnographic research, conclusions are drawn from the mission practices of the individual congregations. Finally, the mission practices of both congregations are compared through the four sub-questions, which enables significant commonalities and differences to be identified and further conclusions drawn.

Chapter 1: Mission in a New Paradigm

Bosch's (1991) seminal work, *Transforming Mission*, uses Kung's (1984, 25) six major paradigms in Christian history as its framework. The six paradigms are:

> 1: The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity
> 2: The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period
> 3: The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm
> 4: The Protestant (Reformation) paradigm
> 5: The modern enlightenment paradigm
> 6: The emerging ecumenical paradigm (Bosch, 1991, 182-83).

It is with the emerging ecumenical paradigm that the two congregations researched, King's Church and Sanctus1, were established. The transition from a modern enlightenment paradigm to an emerging ecumenical paradigm is one that Kung (1984) suggests began after the First World War and is still continuing. The transcripts and membership details of the 1910 *Edinburgh World Missionary Conference*, presided over by John Mott (a Methodist layperson who was the secretary of the *Student Volunteer Movement for Missions*), highlight that they were very much part of the modern enlightenment paradigm. Mott concluded the conference with a call to action, using the following words:

> It is indeed the decisive hour of Christian Mission... Let each Christian so revolve and so act that if a sufficient number of others do likewise, all men before this generation passes away may have an adequate opportunity to know of Christ (Mott, 1910, 239).

These are important words on the cusp of a paradigm change to the emerging ecumenical model. The triumphalist words of Mott represent the prevailing soteriological understanding of mission in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet perhaps what is most striking about Mott's rhetoric is his confidence that all people will have heard about Christ before the

generation has passed away. Just four years later, Europe was plunged into the First World War, and gradually, as time progressed, the confidence that marked those early years of the century drained away. As a result, the ecumenical paradigm emerged and it is to the understanding of mission in this paradigm that our attention now turns.

Until the 1950s, the practice of mission within the Christian religion had a fairly circumscribed meaning (Bosch, 1991, 1), in that it referred to the sending of missionaries to a new territory and the activities that those missionaries undertook. The agency that sent the missionaries was the 'mission agency' and they were sent to the 'mission field' (meaning the entire non-Christian world). However, since that time the word "mission" has adopted a plethora of different meanings, in part depending on the context within which it is used and who is using it. In 1984, in an attempt to bring clarity to discussions regarding the nature of mission in the emerging ecumenical paradigm, the *Anglican Consultative Council* formulated the 'Five Marks of Mission'. The five marks are:

1: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2: To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3: To respond to human need by loving service
4: To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth (Anglican Consultative Council, 1990, 101).

The Lambeth Conference approved these marks in 1988, and *The Forum of Churches Together in England* adopted them in 1997. There is a commendable breadth of scope within the marks of mission; however, they simply offer 'marks' rather than definitions and hence make the assumption that the reader already knows what constitutes mission. The suggestion was therefore made that each province within the Anglican Communion should develop its own definition in reference to the five marks. One example was produced by *The National Council for Churches in Australia*:

> Mission is the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God, flowing from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus, and entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and instrument of the reign of God (The Anglican Communion, 2011a).

The breadth of the five marks of mission means that they are a helpful starting point for this piece of research alongside the breath they are broadly accepted and hence provide a firm foundation to build upon.

A decisive turn, which occurred in the current emerging ecumenical paradigm, is centred on the understanding that mission is a divine rather than a human initiative. This is a move away from a church-centred to a theocentric view of mission, and it was caused by the rediscovery of the centrality of the *missio Dei* within theology.

In a paper read to the *Brandenburg Missionary Conference* in 1932, Barth became one of the first contemporary theologians to articulate that mission is an activity of God rather than an activity of the Church (Thomas, 1996, 101), which is engaged in witness to the mission of God, while mission itself is an activity of a Trinitarian God:

> Must not even the faithful missionary, the most convinced friend of missions, have reason to reflect that the term *missio* was in the ancient Church an expression of the doctrine of the Trinity – namely the expression of the divine sending forth of the self, the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit into the world? Can we indeed claim that we can do it any other way? (Barth, 1957, 114-115).

In 1952, at the *Willingen Conference* of the *International Missionary Council,* Barth's influence on missiology peaked (Bosch, 1991, 390), and it was here that the idea of the *missio Dei* resurfaced most clearly. Curiously though, the expression itself was not used at the conference but arose in the weeks that

followed (Richebacher, 2003, 2). Hartenstein wrote a report for the *Wurttemburg prelate* summarising the conference's closing statement:

> The missionary movement, of which we (the Church) are a part, has its source in the Triune God himself. Out of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God (Hartenstein, cited in Freytag, 1952, 62).

Moltmann, in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975) and latterly in *The Spirit of Life* (1992), developed this notion further, as he identified that the Church was called to participate in God's missionary activity in the world:

> The Church participates in Christ's messianic mission and in the creative mission of the Spirit… The Church participates in the glorifying of God in creation's liberation… The Church participates in the uniting of men [sic] with one another, in the uniting of society with nature and in the uniting of creation with God… Thus the whole being of the Church is marked by participation in the history of God's dealings with the world (Moltmann, 1975, 64-65).

Participation is a significant theological shift from bearing witness to God in the world.[1] A sent Church bears witness to the God of mission, but it does not participate in mission, as mission is God's alone. When the Church participates, it is still sent but it is sent in community with the Triune God.

The Spirit brings fellowship or community, and it is through this being in community that the Church participates in the divine mission. Community brings about participation in the *missio Dei* and is an important theme that

1 Mission is an activity of the Triune God. The Barthian understanding was that the sent Church was invited to bear witness to God. This understanding of mission as 'bearing witness' to the Triune God was still part of Evangelical theology in 1989, when Costas wrote *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization*. First, contextual evangelisation implies witnessing everywhere at all times in the presence of the total activity of the Triune God. The Christian church bears witness not to a static God but rather to a dynamic, divine community that makes itself known in history as Father, Son and Spirit, sending and seeking in love, redeeming and uniting the unloved. God is, therefore, present in every situation of life (Costas, 1989, 84).

develops throughout this thesis. As such, at this early stage, it is important to understand its centrality within the theology of mission:

> The Spirit does not merely bring about fellowship with himself [sic]. He himself issues from fellowship with Father and Son, and the fellowship into which he enters with believers corresponds to the fellowship with the Father and the Son, and is therefore a *Trinitarian fellowship*. In the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the triune God himself is an open inviting fellowship in which the whole of creation finds room (Moltmann, 1992, 218-19).

Humanity and all creation are invited to become part of God's eternal life, and within this Triune of eternal life Moltmann identifies two movements that he describes as being 'rhythmically related to one another: 1) The gathering of Christians in the Church and 2) The mission or sending out of the Church to Christians in the world' (1992, 234). The invitation for the Church is to reflect the Triune God, being both eternally sent and eternally in communion with one another. The Church is included in this divine relationship of being both gathered and sent.

The understanding of God as missionary has many ecclesiological and missiological consequences. Potter (1981) identified four consequences of this theological insight, the most significant consequence being that the 'Church as the people of God is not the centre or goal of mission but the means and instrument' (Potter, 1981, 70). This realisation highlights the move away from a church-centred view of mission to a theocentric one. One of the conclusions that I draw through my research is that King's Church still has an ecclesio-centric understanding of mission, so as a result this shift has not occurred within this particular community. I explore this notion in depth in section 4.5; however, it is worth highlighting at this juncture that this seismic shift towards a theocentric understanding of mission is not universal. Furthermore, this shift, which locates mission as an activity of God that invites human participation, has a communitarian element to it, as it locates mission in the

Trinitarian community. I therefore explore the role of community in mission in sections 5.6 and 6.4.

A further development in mission, realised by the move away from a theocentric understanding of mission, has been the rise of contextualisation. Whilst this practice has always taken place within Christianity, the *Theological Education Fund* coined the term in the 1970s (see Bosch, 1991, 420):

> True contextualisation accords to the Gospel its rightful primacy, its power to penetrate every culture and to speak within each culture, in its own speech and symbol, the word which is both No and Yes, both the grace and the judgement. In order that it may do this, it must be both truly local and ecumenical, truly local in that it embodies God's particular word of grace and judgement for that people and truly ecumenical in being open to the witness of the churches in all other places, and thus saved from absorption into the culture of that place (Newbigin, 1989, 152).

Contextualisation raises the question regarding how far a particular religion should be at home in a culture and how far it should resist. Within this question lies an inherent dualism which can lead to one of two unhelpful backlashes: some propagate clinging to the past or an extreme form of conservatism, while others offer alternatives to the religion as a way of engaging with the challenges that surround it. The first response is dualistic and the second response is syncretistic, but both are failures of the process of contextualisation.

The radical breakthrough in Christian theology came through the rise of Third World contextual theologies, which constituted an epistemological break from traditional doctrines. Whilst traditional theologies were contextual, in that the context tended to be in the form of elitist establishments, the new Third World contextual theologies emerged from below, and the main sources – apart from Scripture and tradition – were the social sciences. Equally important in this new epistemology was the priority on praxis, which became

the starting point of theology, and hence theology emerges from reflection on practice. Bosch develops this point further by suggesting that the best models of contextual theology succeed 'in holding together in creative tension theoria, praxis and poiesis' (1991, 431). Poiesis is defined as the 'imaginative creation or representation of evocative images' (Stackhouse, 1988, 85). Missiology has unfortunately been polarised into a debate between theoria (truth) and praxis (justice). Bosch (1991) brings these two elements together and then adds a third one – poiesis:

> People do not only need truth and justice; they also need beauty, the rich resource of symbol, piety, worship, love, awe and mystery. Only too often in the tug-of-war between the priority of truth and the priority of justice, this dimension gets lost (1991, 431).

Holding theoria, praxis and poiesis in tension corresponds with another creative tension in mission between orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy. Orthopathy was an attempt to understand mission in the contemporary paradigm. Seong Ahn (2003) develops three paradigms different to those of Kung (1984), with the current paradigm being called the 'Era of Experienced Innocence' (2003, 16). The *Era of Innocence* was the first paradigm which sought an authentic understanding of truth; as a consequence, orthodoxy emerged. In the second paradigm the *Era of Experience* orthopraxis emerged: '[t]he head words of this era were transforming, revolution, identity, society, responsibility, ethos and *missio Dei,* to name but a few. The principle of doing theology was indigenization and contextualisation' (Seong Ahn, 2003, 16). The current paradigm is the *Era of Experienced-Innocence,* about which Seong Ahn says 'the head words of this era are relationship, emotional intelligence, symbiosis, community, interdependence, pathos and *Missio Hominis'* (2003, 16). Central within this new paradigm is respect for other human beings, because by demonstrating respect a human being can keep his or her dignity in any situation:

> In this sense, it is a cognitive love, because it inchoates the love of the second great commandment that "love your neighbor as you love yourself." Through this love, it builds up the community and gives priority to the relations. This type also tries to start from how others feel. Therefore, it cherishes the *sensus fidei*, the believer's sense of faith, the feeling for faith's basic themes, and consequently it enables a democratic theology or a popular theology (Seong Ahn, 2003, 17).

Orthopathy seeks a missiology that is focused on right feeling, rather than right thought or right actions, and it is thought that through orthopathy right action and right thought will emerge naturally. The move from orthodoxy to orthopraxis to orthopathy recognises the paradigmatic shifts that have occurred in human culture and the evolving nature of where meaning is located. The shift towards orthopathy resonates with the cultural shifts that have occurred in the past few decades and locates meaning in feeling, rather than in thought or action.

Bosch suggests that rather than focusing on one of these areas, all three need to be held in creative tension. One of the questions that I ask of the two congregations (see section 3.3) is whether their mission practices are dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy. This question recognises that a paradigmatic shift in the practice of mission has occurred. I ask a further question exploring the role of poiesis within the congregations, in order to explore how it influences their mission practices.

Finally this chapter turns to contextualisation within the two congregations. Bevans (1992) identifies six models of contextual theology that have surfaced since the 1970s. These models cover a broad spectrum, with human experience at one end and experience of the past and scripture at the other (1992, 32), and provide a framework through which to evaluate the contextualisation that is taking place. Three of the models – the countercultural, synthetic and translation – relate directly to the two congregations (see Chapters 4 and 5), so I focus strongly on them within this

thesis. It is important to highlight how particular contextual theology models relate to the two congregations, which is best done by reflecting on experience. This is developed in greater depth and in relation to mission practices throughout this thesis, but in particular in section 6.2.
The six models highlight the broad range of elements within contextualisation. This picture can be slightly confusing, however, so Bosch attempts to offer some clarity when he states that '[m]ission as contextualisation is an affirmation that God has turned towards the world' (Bosch, 1991, 426) and 'contextualisation involves the construction of a variety of local theologies' (Bosch, 1991, 427). This construction of a local theology, or '[t]heology in the vernacular' (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2008, 370), involves 'painstaking attention to learning a vocabulary, mastering grammatical rules and learning when it is appropriate to speak' (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2008, 370). Theology in the vernacular listens to culture and learns about culture before speaking to culture.

1.2: Conclusions on Mission

This chapter has sought to highlight some of the significant changes in the mission practices and the theology of mission of the past century. As the context has changed, it can be recognised that the vitriolic attitude of Mott in 1910 was the final voice in the narrative of the previous modern enlightenment paradigm. The new emerging ecumenical paradigm has brought with it, amongst other things, postmodernity and the realisation that linear progress is not certain. It is within this paradigm that new mission practices have developed and within which there has been a rediscovery of the *missio Dei*.

The next chapter explores some of the wider sociological shifts that have occurred in this paradigm, and from this base of mission and context the thesis moves forward into research. As highlighted in this chapter, the current paradigm has seen a rise in contextualisation and consequently the

development of orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy as complementary methods of mission. Therefore, in order to understand the mission practices of the two congregations, the broader cultural context in which they are located needs to be understood. The forthcoming chapter explores some of the sociological and religious trends that have occurred in this emerging ecumenical paradigm by locating them in Manchester city centre.

Chapter 2: Sociological Context

This chapter examines some of the sociological literature that is pertinent to my research into the mission practices of the two congregations and the context within which they are located. Alongside this sociological literature, the chapter comments and reflects on the particular geographic context of both communities, Manchester city centre. The aim of which is to highlight how particular locations in the city centre exemplify some of the broader sociological trends occurring in contemporary Western culture, and then to determine whether these trends impact the mission practices of the two congregations.

My methodology (see Chapter 3) introduces in greater detail four questions that I seek to answer through my research. These four questions are:

Question 1: What relationship does this congregation have with culture?
Question 2: Are the mission practices of the congregation dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy?
Question 3: What is the role of *poiesis* in this congregation?
Question 4: Does the idea of community play a significant role in the mission practices of the congregation? If so, which model of community is offered and how is it significant?

Reflecting on the sociological and geographical contexts in this chapter provides the sociological underpinning for these questions and justifies why they are pertinent to the two congregations.

2.1: Contemporary British Society

A number of theorists (Bauman, 2000; Castells, 1996; Davie, 1994; Giddens, 1994; Lyon, 2000) have argued that the 1960s were a key decade in the ending of 'The Enlightenment Project'. The institutional structures of cultural

traditionalism started to crumble in Britain through legalisation on abortion in 1967; the legalisation of homosexuality in 1967; the ending of the Lord Chamberlain's control over the British Theatre in 1968; the granting of easier divorce in 1969; the flourishing of youth culture; the rise of feminism and the advent of student rebellion. Coupled with these movements was the philosophical assault on the concept of the metanarrative – a universalising, overarching narrative that attempts to make sense of the world. As Lyotard wrote, '[t]he grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation' (1979, 37).

There have been a number of different names and definitions given to this post-enlightenment sociological context. Bauman (2000) called it 'liquid modernity' and Beck (2006) coined the term 'second modernity', but perhaps the most common phrase used is 'postmodernity'. Drane hyphenates the term to create 'post-modernity', in order, he says, 'to draw attention to the provisionality and evolving nature of the changes that are now taking place and affecting all our lives' (2000, 6). It is within this cultural context that both congregations researched have been started and geographically the city of Manchester is where they are located. It is this cultural context through which I explore the communities' relationship in Question 1: What relationship does this congregation have with culture? Dulles says of culture that '[it] almost defies definition because it is a pervasive atmosphere rather than an articulated system' (Dulles, 1996). So what is the pervasive atmosphere of the city that these two congregations call home?

2.2: Manchester – So Much to Answer for

'Manchester, so much to answer for' (Morrissey and Marr, 1984, Track 10) sang Morrissey, lead singer of the iconic Mancunian 80's band *The Smiths*. It is in the city of Manchester that this piece of research is firmly located. It was the first modern industrial city, the city that saw the birth of the computer

and vegetarianism, the home of Coronation Street and the world's richest and biggest football clubs.

In May 2004, in an article in *The Observer*, Bainbridge wrote:

> Fifteen years after "Madchester," eight years after the IRA bomb, and two years after the Commonwealth Games, Manchester is moving faster than ever. If you're looking for a city that is fully embracing the 21st century, look no further... Birmingham may think of itself as the country's second city. Manchester likes to think a little bigger than that (Bainbridge, 2004).

Both congregations are located in Manchester city centre, in an area that since the explosion of the 3,300lb IRA bomb in 1996 has been significantly redeveloped. The bomb brought devastation to the people, businesses and the built environment, with initial surveys showing that over 1,200 buildings had been damaged across 1.2 million m^2. However, after the initial shock and despair had calmed, the city council and developers began to see this as an opportunity to develop the city centre in a coherent manner.

Through that process of redevelopment into a modern regional hub, along with many other factors, the city centre now manifests many physical representations of the sociological landscape of contemporary twenty-first-century Britain. Massey introduces the idea of 'The Practiced Place' (Massey, 2002, 463), claiming that '[a]ll social relations are practiced, and practices are embodied, material. Places are the product of material practices'. Massey explores Wythenshawe, an estate in South Manchester where she was raised, and how the physical places on the estate carry both meaning and identity for the local community.

Perhaps one of Massey's most interesting reflections is the contrast that she draws between Lefebvre's concept of a monumental space and her experience of spatiality in Wythenshawe. Lefebvre famously writes:

> Monumental space offered each member of society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one… The monument thus effected a "consensus," and this in the strongest sense of the term, rendering it practical and concrete (Lefebvre, 1991, 220).

Massey highlights the idea that spaces, whether monumental or not, welcome or reject selectively: 'To walk along the parade of shops is to feel oneself on occasions drawn in, and at other moments repulsed, at yet others most clearly excluded' (Massey, 471, 2002). A monumental space seeks to create a sense of identity and togetherness, and yet like an ordinary space, such as a row of shops, this monumental space has the ability to both draw in and exclude. I want to suggest that the city centre has been created as a monumental space for Manchester, and yet that monumental space has the power to exclude by creating a narrative that many people within the metropolis do not recognise.

The narrative that the city centre seeks to portray is one of a vibrant, successful, global city that manifests many facets of post-modernity. I therefore want to use it as a monumental space within that particular narrative, so I will use it as a guide through the socio-religious context of twenty-first-century Britain. The concept of a monumental space provides this piece of research with a helpful bridge between broad sociological theory and a particular geographic context. The bridge, of the monumental space, enables theory to be rooted in a particular context through which my research, to relate sociological theory to the mission practices of the two congregations in Manchester city centre, is enabled.

I have chosen four different monumental spaces within the city centre as the local manifestation of wider socio-religious trends. These four areas are: Canal Street, Market Street, St. Ann's Church and Manchester Central. Canal Street is the centre of The Gay Village in Manchester, and it will be used to explore the rise in contextual theologies and the collapse of a unitary, linear

history. Market Street, which is the shopping centre and home to the likes of McDonalds, Vodafone, Tesco, Nike and many other global brands, will be used to explore the phenomenon of globalisation. St Ann's Church, which is the city centre's parish church, is located on St. Ann's Square and will be used to explore secularisation, sacralisation and post-secularisation. Finally, Manchester Central, which used to be Central Station, is a conference centre and will be used to explore the concept of the network society.

2.3: Market Street and Globalisation

Market Street is a bustling shopping street at the heart of Manchester. On one side of the street is *The Arndale Centre*, the largest city centre shopping mall in Europe, with a retail floor space of just under 1,500,000 square feet. On the other side of the street are more shops, the majority being well-established global brands such as Tesco, Starbucks, Nike, Manchester United and Adidas. However, there is very little that identifies Market Street as being in Manchester, and it is indistinguishable from many other city centres in Britain. Friedman (2000, 9) suggests that free market capitalism is the driving idea behind globalisation and brings with it homogenisation. This homogenisation can be seen in the city centre of Manchester, so if Freidman is correct in what he says, homogenised areas of the city centre, such as Market Street, are monuments to globalisation.

However, is Freidman correct in his claim that homogenisation is indicative of globalisation? Klein (2000) agrees and argues more strongly that global capitalism seeks to promote choice and diversity, yet in practice it places restrictions on consumer choice:

> Everyone has, in one form or another, witnessed the odd double vision of vast consumer choice coupled with Orwellian new restrictions on cultural production and public space... It is there on the trendy downtown main street as yet another favourite café, hardware store, independent bookstore or art video

> house is cleared away and replaced by one of the Pac-Man chains: Starbucks, Home Depot, Gap, Chapters, Borders, Blockbuster (Klein, 2000, 130).

Manchester city centre has been globalised and hence, by definition, homogenised. This has not always been the case, though, as a century or more ago the city, due to its economic dominance based on manufacturing, was at the forefront of globalisation: 'Manchester was without challenge the first and greatest industrial city in the world' (Hall, 1998, 310). By the early 19th century, it was not only a centre of trade for the region but it was also linked with the whole world (Briggs, 1963, 105), but arguably more significant was that it was the innovative focus of several of the most important developments in the newly industrialised world economy (Peck and Ward, 2002, 18). Manchester helped to shape and mould the newly emerging global economy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and such a formative role was reflected in the city's global position. King says that at the turn of the century, 'the ten largest cities in the world were, in order of magnitude: London, New York, Parish, Berlin, Chicago, Philadelphia, Tokyo, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Manchester' (King, 1990, 369). Dicken highlights that Manchester's global influence at this point was significant in both business and culture terms:

> In 1907, five of the twenty largest manufacturing companies in Britain were headquartered in Manchester. Such economic dominance was reflected in an extraordinarily vibrant cultural life, much of it underpinned by migrant entrepreneurs, scientists and professionals from continental Europe (Dicken, 2002, 19).

However, also according to Dicken, Manchester is no longer a global city in the sense defined by the current generation of global city scholars such as Friedmann, who in 1982 offered the first coherent analysis of the form and function of world cities (Friedmann and Wolff, 1982). The underlying logic of the thesis is that different types of locations perform different specialist functions across the globe. Geography and economics are intertwined, and

one of the outcomes from this relationship that has assumed global proportions is the world city. These have, according to Friedmann and Wolff (1982, 320), nine defining functions: management; banking and finance; legal services; accounting; technical consulting; telecommunications and computing; international transportation; research and higher education. It is interesting to note that not one of these nine defining functions relates to manufacturing, which highlights that it is not perceived to be a specialist function of a global city, whereas when Manchester was a global city it was the global function upon which it was built.

The Globalisation and World Cities Research Network (GaWC), based at Loughborough University, outlined a roster of world cities founded on their connectivity through four 'advanced producer services', namely accountancy, advertising, banking/finance and law (GaWC Research Bulletin 5, GaWC, Loughborough University, 28 July 1999). The GaWC inventory identifies three levels of global cities and several sub-ranks. In their 2010 classification of global cities, GaWC identified Manchester as a Beta city.[2] Whilst Manchester was once in the top 10 global cities, it is now a Beta city, meaning that the global influence it has is limited. In this classification, Manchester is the second city, London being an Alpha++ city and Birmingham being a Beta- city.

A further and significant element of globalisation has been immigration. Some international movement has always existed: in Britain, for example, immigration in the nineteenth century was characterised by a large Irish component and the first half of the twentieth century saw an influx of Jewish people. Yet, post-war immigration was much greater, as significant numbers of people from the Commonwealth migrated to Britain for vast and varied push and pull factors. Pull factors could include family, the possibly of

[2] The GaWC classification has the three categories of Alpha, Beta and Gamma, which are subdivided three further ways, for example: Beta +, Beta, Beta -. In addition to this the Alpha category has a further classification of Alpha ++, but only London and New York are in this category.

employment and a better standard of living, while push factors include poverty or religious persecution. Three factors influenced the post-war boom in immigration, namely the demand for labour in the 1960s, the 1962 Immigration Act and events elsewhere in the world, such as the partition of India in 1947. The usual pattern would be for the man to arrive looking for work, and then once that work had been found the remainder of the family would join him. The distribution of these families over the UK would be varied, with some regions having a significant number of immigrants and some hardly any. This was largely due to the new immigrant communities moving to places where there was work, which were often the large industrial cities of the north of England, such as Manchester. Hence, immigration has played a significant role in the shaping of Manchester, which can be observed in the city's diverse nature. For instance, its China Town is located within the city centre boundary, and within a two-mile radius one can find sizeable Caribbean, Jewish, Indian and Pakistani communities – all highlighting the diversity of the city due to migration.

Davie explores the role that immigration has played in shaping post-war British religious identity:

> The arrival of significant numbers of black Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus has, nonetheless, brought a new dimension to post-war British religion. The Christian churches were offered an unexpected opportunity for growth – never mind renewal – as black (usually Afro-Caribbean) Christians arrived in major cities (Davie, 1994, 26).

The UK population has diversified through immigration, which in turn has had an impact on church attendance and certain expressions of Christianity have been in ascendance. One example of this is the growth of Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC). This church is made up largely of Nigerian Christians who have immigrated to London since the church was founded in 1992. It now claims to have over 12,000 members and describes itself as 'the largest growing church in Europe' (KICC, 2012a). (The changing

nature of religion will be discussed further in section 2.6). Globalisation has had a significant impact on the city centre, both in the globalised brand names that can now be found there and its ethnic diversity. It is this globalised context in which the two congregations operate.

2.4: Canal Street – Linear History and Metanarratives

On the southern side of the city centre is Canal Street. Apartments, cafes and bars now surround a canal that was once a main artery serving the industrial city of Manchester. On the Bank Holiday weekend in August, hundreds of thousands of people descend on Canal Street for *Gay Pride*, the city's annual celebration of lesbian and gay people and their culture. Canal Street and the surrounding Gay Village are at the geographic centre of the largest gay community outside of London (Manchester City Council, 2012a). Voices that were once silenced are now heard, and Canal Street is a monument to the acceptance of diversity in a pluralistic city, the rise of which, with many competing minor histories, has signified the end of unitary linear history and is emblematic of the collapse of the meta-narrative. In many ways the changed usage of the Rochdale Canal, around which Canal Street is sited, highlights the wider philosophical changes that have occurred.

The Rochdale Canal was opened in 1804, and the last full journey took place on it in 1937. Its operation peaked in the late 19th century as cotton and wool were transported to the industrial cities of Manchester and Salford. The canal thrived by serving these two industrial cities, and with this came the belief in progress realised through sequential linear history. And yet by the mid-twentieth century the canal was closed. The pubs on Canal Street that once served refreshments to canal workers became derelict and the narrative of progress started to unravel.

Many of the projects of modernity, from Marxism to Freudianism, promised linear progress towards a future utopia, but this utopia has not been realised,

hence the widespread disillusion with modernist metanarratives and their association with linear time. This disillusionment can be heard in contemporary novels that connect clearly with youth culture. For example, Tsiolkas comments:

> Vietnam is history. Auschwitz is history. Hippies are history. Punks are history. God is history. Hollywood is history. The Soviet Union is history... I will become history. This fucking shithole planet will become history. Take more drugs (1995, 87).

Here, even Auschwitz, which for many represents the end of modern history, is seen as having become history – not in the sense of having taken its place in a historical continuum leading up to the present, however, but rather as being obsolete and irrelevant to the perpetual unchanging present. Jameson (1985) argues that we are moving away from a modernist concern with temporality and towards an increasing spatialisation of culture. One of the basic features of this culture is 'the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents' (1985, 125), and within this culture there is no narrative or progressional connection, as the present is severed from both the past and the future. The fragmentation of time prevents the formation of an overall picture and is focused entirely on the present. Lyon asserts that Disneyland is the epitome of this approach to time and space:

> In Disneyland, time is telescoped. In World Showcase, not only are some of the world's most famous places available, but also their connections in time are confused. Past, present and future appear not as a line but as a melange, a collage... The details matter little, it seems. Mere dates and locales are incidental to Disney's "history." If nostalgia can be generated and tourism stimulated, then history can be created, customized, and consumed... Disneyland is both an expression of, and a vehicle for, time-space compression (2000, 125-26).

A second related consequence to the rejection of unitary linear history has been a turn away from the centre towards the margins. The perspective of

history as told by the West was the history of the powerful, the victorious and the rulers causing the suppression of marginal histories. Thinkers such as Lyotard and Foucault attempt to give the margins a voice, thus undermining this unitary image of Western history, reducing the one united meta-history to a plurality of minor histories.

In the early 1980s, Canal Street was a place of derelict pubs and cotton factories. It was dark and unvisited, but because of this it became a clandestine meeting place for the gay community of Manchester. In 1990, a gay property developer, Carol Ainscow, opened the first bar, called *Manto*, explicitly for the gay community. It had a large plate-glass front to it as a way of Ainscow seeking openness and inclusion. She said, 'I felt sick of having to knock on doors and hide' (*The Guardian*, 2004a). Gradually more bars opened, and as the years progressed Canal Street was transformed into the centre of a vibrant gay village. In 1999, Channel 4 recorded the gay television drama *Queer as Folk*, and by 2004 it was claimed that Canal Street was 'perhaps the most successful gay village in Europe' (*The Guardian*, 2004a). It is fascinating to observe that in the 1980s the gay community in Manchester was hidden, whereas now it is celebrated. Alongside the rise of the gay communities, Manchester, through immigration, has seen many other diverse communities grow and flourish. The city now sees many different minor histories, which sit alongside the previously uniting sequential linear meta-history of modernity.

This move away from modernity's understanding of sequential linear time to a more fluid approach to time has many implications for religions, perhaps the most obvious being the sequential nature of many of the world's religions. For example, both the Torah and the Bible are largely sequential (but not straightforward history books) and indicate a culmination of human history in the coming, or second coming, of a messianic figure at a certain period of time. In contrast, Fukuyama (1992) sets out his version of the end of human history, which is much closer to a whimper than to an apocalyptic bang

described by some cults or Christian writers such as Lindsay (1970). For Fukuyama, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union signified the end of battling ideologies as liberal democracy triumphed. The big questions are now settled and the future is about the best means to fulfil the promise of the reigning paradigm.

The rejection of sequential linear time has a bearing on the mission practices of the two congregations in this research. For example, within King's Church I identify a post-millennial eschatology that is firmly sequential, as it works towards Christ's second coming (see section 4.7). The rejection of sequential linear time has a limited effect on congregations that have a realised eschatology, whereas for a congregation with a post-millennial eschatology the effect is significant. King's Church's ecclesiology, mission practices and pneumatology are all shaped by a post-millennial eschatology that is incompatible with the rejection of sequential linear time. It therefore represents a major philosophical assault on this particular form of eschatology.

2.5: Central Station – The Network Society

My third monument was built in 1880. Originally it was called Central Station and became a significant transport hub for Manchester, serving more than one million railway passengers in 1959. In 1969, it was deemed surplus to requirements as the city reorganised its transport hubs, and in 1973 it was sold as a car park. Fortunately, it had a grade II listing and so the building was preserved. In 1978, the city council bought the building back and started to develop it as The Greater Manchester Exhibition Centre – GMEX, a centre for communication and business exchange:

> The conversion of Central Station into one of the UK's greatest exhibition centres was one of the first urban regeneration projects ever to be undertaken. At the time, it was a pioneering piece of work to take a disused railway station shell and give it a new lease of life as a venue for events, exhibitions, concerts

> and conferences. It would come to symbolise what was significant and unique about the Manchester landscape, which is renowned for the way it seamlessly blends contemporary and cutting-edge architecture in a setting that features centuries-old buildings, which define the city and tell its history...
>
> Over its lifetime, GMEX became a major part of the civic and cultural life of Manchester. The venue played host to numerous national trade and public exhibitions, high-profile concerts and international events, including a major role in Manchester's 2002 Commonwealth Games (*Manchester Central*, 2012b).

When Central Station was first opened it was a transport hub. People travelled to and from it to connect with friends and family, and likewise businesses also used the station to transport their goods all over the country and the world. As Manchester GMEX (renamed Manchester Central in 2007) was redeveloped as a conference centre it assumed this role of a hub, albeit a very different type of hub. It became a facility where people would connect with others in their networks, either through music concerts (it played a significant role in the 'Madchester' days of the 1990s), business conventions, trade fairs or exhibitions. Hence, I am using Manchester Central as my Mancunian monument to the 'network society'.

It is interesting to note that the development of Central Station into Manchester GMEX began during the same time period as the start of the information technology revolution. For Castells (1996), this revolution, which started in the 1970s, was the beginning of a new sociology and now underpins all else in contemporary society (1996, 6). This is a bold, universalising claim; however, few would argue that information technology has had a profound effect on the social structure of contemporary society, which Castells calls the network society.

Key to understanding the network society is Castells' new axis of social change: the 'space of flows' (1996, 407). What flows within the network society is unpredictable and is beyond the political grasp of the individual, the

local community or even the nation state. Whilst initially this seemed like a more egalitarian structure, the key people are the switch holders, who control the flows, and hence the power, and therefore have a significant amount of influence in the network society. Flows serve to create identity in a network society, with Ward (2008) identifying that alongside the formal places of belonging, churches also belong to particular networks. He says that they are 'established and maintained through the flow of theological expression and its mediation in lifestyle and identity' (Ward, 2008, 168). Flows of influence, of religious belief and cultural taste, may now be more easily discerned than previously. These flows relate to what Anderson (1991) calls 'imagined communities', in which belonging is attached to certain symbols that are significant in forming a collective identity, such as the WWJD bracelet.[3] These imagined communities are not geographically tied but are based around the flow within a network. There are certain hubs and nodes within this network, but essentially it is free-flowing and free-moving. Both congregations belong to, and have influence in, particular networks, and this is explored in reference to their mission practices as this thesis develops. Alongside this notion, the role of community is explored through question 4 of my research, which seeks to explore what forms of community are forming, whether they are imagined communities or are different and how significant the place of community is in the mission practices of the two congregations (see section 3.3 for more detail).

It is claimed that in a network society the importance of 'place' is secondary to the importance of 'flows'. A network society does not replace a neighbourhood but changes it as the relationship with the local changes. As Beck says, 'To live in one place no longer means to live together, and living together no longer means living in the same place' (2000, 74). Both communities researched are located in Manchester city centre, but for Sanctus1 its affirmation of the culture of the city centre shapes the community. For Sanctus1 the city centre operates as the 'hub' in their

[3] WWJD stands for 'What Would Jesus Do?'

network, hubs being identified by Castells (1996, 411) as strategically important places. The hubs are defined by the network and link it to specific places with specific social and cultural conditions. Furthermore, they produce and reproduce the strategic functions of the network and are therefore geographically important as places of connection within the network society.

Within the network society Castells (1996, 3) suggests there is creative tension between the Net and the Self. He says, 'Our societies are increasingly structured around the bipolar opposition of the Net and the Self' (Castells, 1996, 3). The Net is the new, networked society which is replacing vertically integrated hierarchies as the dominant form of social organisation. The Self, on the other hand, relates to the multiple practices through which people try to reaffirm identity and meaning. Castells says that both Net and Self are seen as a 'type of identity-building process [which] leads to a different outcome in constituting society' (Castells, 1997, 8), and thus identity-building becomes significant in a network society:

> In a desire to find a sense of direction and purpose in a world of anonymously flowing power, identity construction becomes a central preoccupation, whether as resistance to exclusion outside the net, or as a project expressing a desire for a better future... Castells' case is that, in a world increasingly dominated by the flows of power, wealth and information within the network society, modes of resistance coalesce around the "power of identity" (Lyon, 2000, 38-47).

Castells explores the power of identity in the Net by highlighting that meaning and identity were previously found in, amongst other places, political parties, nation states and churches (1997, 254). In the Net, communal identities become centrally important as sources of meaning, either proactively pulling towards a better future – feminism, environmentalism – or reactively looking back to a preferred past related to God, family, ethnicity, family and locality. However, as the previous legitimating identities have been drained of their authority they have been dispersed into 'resistance identities' (Castells, 1997, 254). Resistance identities are reactions against what was once felt to control

and constrain: ‘They form… partly to compensate for the dissolution of older shared identities, and partly to compensate the new demand and constraints of the network society’ (Lyon, 2000, 48). Religious fundamentalism can be seen as a resistance identity that forms to compensate for the collapse of the old order. In, King’s Church I identify a counter-cultural contextual theology model (see section 6.2), a position from which they form a resistance identity.

The second way of constructing identity is through communal identities, which are structured through and around projects that aim to create a new social reality. The creation of a new social reality is a driving factor in a number of the world’s religions, so it is fascinating that Castells says very little about how faith and spirituality may help to form communal identities. This is an interesting oversight, as religion has been central in the construction of new social realities throughout human history. Lyon develops this critique further:

> It may turn out that religious activities have more resilience across the whole spectrum of net-and-self than he [Castells] currently gives credence to. Religious activities may be associated with both net and self, in varied permutations, and indeed, may echo some significant structural changes taking place within postmodernising situations… New kinds of religious connectedness are emerging, even as traditional hierarchies fade and fall. Some work with and through older containers; others leave them behind entirely (Lyon, 2000, 48-49).

A number of sociologists such as Featherstone and Lash (2002) and Hobsbawm (1994) claim that society is crying out for community: ‘Men and women look for groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world where all else is moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain’ (Hobsbawm, 428, 1994). However, there is little consensus regarding what is meant by community, and due to this lack of consensus various different models of community are offered, for example the aforementioned ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991), which is not based on face-to-face interaction

between its members but on a mental image of their affinity that members hold in their mind. The theme of community is developed throughout this thesis, in particular in relation to the idea of community in the mission practices of both congregations (sections 5.7 and 6.3).

In contrast to the rise of community is the rise of the individual – the Self. Due to the aforementioned rise of minor histories and the collapse of the meta-narrative, there is now an absence of one 'supreme office' (Bauman, 2000, 60) that advises people on the correct choices to make, as there are now many offices vying for authority. The boundaries between right and wrong dissolve and the world becomes a collection of individual infinite possibilities where everything is down to the individual's choice. Some of these supreme offices are more subtle than others, such as consumerism, but arguably they are as powerful as their traditional counterparts. In many ways the 'choice' of religion or not involves a person choosing to select their supreme office. Traditionally, religions have often provided the supreme office, so this is a challenging environment for the Church to be located in. Internally, different supreme offices are sought in an attempt to provide authority over particular issues, while externally, in a pluralist context, the truth on which the Church once thought it had a monopoly is being challenged by other truth claims.

In chapter 1 (page 14) orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxis are introduced. Orthodoxy (right thought) has been seen historically as following the traditional teachings of a particular religion. Orthopathy (right feeling), however, is more subjective, as personal feelings become the supreme office in the decisions that an individual makes. The second question that I ask of the two congregations is 'Are the mission practices of the congregation dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy?' This question seeks to examine whether the mission practices of the two congregations have adapted to the changing location of the supreme office. Furthermore, it is significant because it links many of the sociological religious theories that are

emerging in contemporary society to the mission practices of the two congregations.

2.6: St Ann's Church – Religion in Contemporary Society

The clock tower standing at the western end of St Ann's Church is the place from which all distances to Manchester are measured. It is figuratively the centre of Manchester. St Ann's was consecrated in 1712, at that time serving the small rural town of Manchester. It stood between the Collegiate Church and the market, and its tall tower could be seen from all directions. It is now the city centre parish church, the tower is obscured by the large apartment blocks that overlook it, the Collegiate Church is now the cathedral and the Parish of St. Ann's is now significantly larger than the original town. Manchester has grown and evolved, and yet throughout this time St. Ann's has remained. St Ann's is my fourth monument: it is a monument to religion, and I will use it to explore the changing nature of religion in contemporary society.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Britain was changing rapidly, both in the country and in the expanding urban environment. A new wealth had been created through increased trading and manufacturing. Brown notes that this new wealth '[sharpened] the awareness that the economic bonds that tied people to the parish, land and landowner were dissolving' (Brown, 2001, 18). Textile villages were formed and it was often the case that the distance from the local parish church necessitated that mill owners and villagers erect their own church – usually not of the establishment. Once again, Brown comments '[t]extile, mining and fishing villages became hotbeds of Methodism and dissent, and panic stricken clergy started to equate the rise of dissent with the decline in religion' (Brown, 2001, 18). Whilst the *idea* of religious decline was born within the country and with the notion of breaking social bonds, it was quickly assimilated and developed in a new context – the industrial town.

It was during this time that Manchester made its great leap forward as a result of the cotton trade. Coal-driven, steam-powered mills ushered in a new era as rural workers in their thousands migrated to the burgeoning industrial city. Haslam writes:

> By the end of the 1830s, after the industrialisation of cotton manufacture, Lancashire was responsible for 90 per cent of the cotton manufactured nationwide. England needed Manchester. Manchester was at the vanguard of wealth creation in the country, accounting for nearly 50 per cent of all export earnings (Haslam, 1999, 7).

The secularisation narrative also began in the 'late eighteenth-century world of changing power relations' (Brown, 2001, 16). Prior to this, at a national level, the Church enjoyed a privileged position in the House of Lords and exerted considerable power over people through the parish system. There were a number of challenges to the Church at the time due to the rise of Methodism and dissident Protestant groups, religious apathy and secularism. Brown (2001, 17) identifies that 'established churchmen feared the dissenters the most because they vastly outnumbered the secularists and because they gave the indifferent the excuse not to submit to parish authority'.

In *God is Dead* (2002), Bruce offers a summary description of involvement in organised religion over the past 150 years, the time period that ties in with the birth of the secularisation narrative. He looks at church attendance and membership, comparing the 1851 Census of Religious Worship data with Brierley's (2006) Census and survey of 1979, 1989 and 1999. In a summary of Brierley's data, Bruce (2002, 64) states 'the big organisations shrank; those that stayed stable or grew were the small ones. Hence the pattern for England overall was a decline in attendance over thirty years from 12 to 7.5 per cent of the population'. He continues:

> The picture of change in church membership over the twentieth century is clear... Church membership for the UK as a whole fell from 27 per cent of the population in 1900 to 10 per cent in 2000... Let us put these figures in a longer

> historical context. In 1800 some 18 per cent of the adult population was in church membership. In 1850 it was about 27 per cent. In 1900 it was 26 per cent. Set against those figures, I can see no reason to describe the subsequent changes over the twentieth century (21 per cent in 1940; 10 per cent in 2000) as anything other than decline (Bruce, 2002, 67).

Bruce looks at Sunday school attendance and also at the number of full-time professional ministers and for both he sees nothing but decline and ultimately death. He states, 'By the end of the century, the number of Sunday scholars was so small that either only the children of church-attenders went to Sunday school or not even all the children of regular churchgoers were being socialised' (2002, 69).

However, there are subtleties within this statement that the headlines do not reveal, and helpfully Davie (1994) identifies four post-war chronological religious shifts that have occurred in the UK. The first shift, from 1945-1960, is defined by the response to six years of war that left Britain in ruins. A process of reconstructing the material and reconstituting of political, economic and social life of the country began. By the 1950s, Davie (1994, 31) identifies 'a distinct feeling of well-being, of revival even, within church circles'. The 1950s were also a time where 'the sacred (at least in its Anglican forms) synchronized nicely with the secular in this predominately conservative period' (1994, 31). This close relationship and the feeling of restoration was most vividly symbolised in the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953. This was a period of restoration or reconstruction, a time to rebuild institutions of the past. However, according to Davie, 'the gradual realisation that the old order could not be rebuilt and that a majority of the nation remained largely indifferent to what was going on in churches required a different type of response' (1994, 32). There was a widespread indifference to the Church and a growing awareness that the urbanised were slipping away from the Church's influence.

The 1960s was a significant period and the Church was in for a bumpy ride:

> By the end of the decade, a profound and probably irreversible revolution in social and, above all, sexual attitudes had taken place. Significant immigration had occurred and expectations of and about the role of women were evolving fast. Traditional, often Christian-based, values were no longer taken for granted; questioned by many, they were abandoned by increasing numbers (Davie, 1994, 33).

The Church of England responded in a variety of ways. They rearranged parishes, modernised liturgy and worship and ecumenically started to work collaboratively. There were intellectual debates and the radical transformation of the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican II, which served to alter the framework of ecclesiastical life. However, there were some (Douglas, 1973) who recognised the vulnerability of the approach that the Church was taking, and that the breaking down of the barriers between the sacred and secular left it open to secularisation. This raises a key question for the Church to wrestle with and is the basis of much contextual theology. Should the Church be open to the accusation of syncretism by its accommodation of culture, or should it firmly distance itself from culture? I seek answers to this question when I explore – through question one – the relationship the two congregations have with culture. It is interesting to note the models of contextual theology that emerge.

Secularisation names the process by which religion declines in significance, the basic premise being that modernisation leads to secularisation (Bruce, 2000, 2). This premise has been subjected to serious challenges in the past two decades. However, before this is examined further, let us first look at two broader definitions of secularisation and some of theories as to why it has occurred. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) definition points to the declining social power of religion: 'The progressive autonomization of societal sectors from the domination of religious meaning and institutions' (1966, 74). A more expansive definition is offered by Bruce, who highlights three different facets of secularisation:

> (a) The declining importance of religion for the operation of non-religious roles and institutions such as those of the state and the economy; (b) the decline in social standing of religious roles and institutions; and (c) a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices, display beliefs of a religious kind, and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by such beliefs (Bruce, 2002, 3).

The two most common theories of secularisation are those that claim religion will die away altogether (disappearance thesis) and those that claim, rather more cautiously, that religion will certainly remain, but it will be in a privatised form with little or no cultural or social significance (differentiation thesis). The disappearance thesis states that religion has been killed by capitalist modernity – religion is *already* dead:

> Capitalism, and the modern age, is a period in which, with the extinction of the sacred and the spiritual, the deep underlying materiality of all things has finally risen dripping and convulsing into the light of the day; and it is clear that culture itself is one of those things whose fundamental material is now for us not merely evident but quite inescapable (Jameson, 1985, 67).

Bruce, a prominent proponent of this theory, says that by 2031 the Methodist church will fold and the Church of England will be 'reduced to a trivial voluntary association with a large portfolio of heritage property' (2002, 74). Brown (2001, 198) is equally as damning, stating 'the culture of Christianity is gone in the Britain of the new millennium. Britain is showing the world how religion as we know it can die'.

For differentiation theorists, secularisation is the process whereby 'religion ceases to be significant in the working of the social system' (Wilson, 1982, 148):

> Secularisation relates to the diminution in the social significance of religion. Its application covers things such as the sequestration by political powers of the property and facilities of religious agencies; the shift from religious to secular control of various erstwhile activities and functions of religion; the decline in

> the proportion of their time, energy, and resources which men devote to super-empirical concerns; the decay of religious institutions; the supplanting, in matters of behaviour, of religious precepts by demands that accord with strictly technical criteria; and the gradual replacement of specifically religious consciousness by an empirical, rational, instrumental orientated; the abandonment of mythical, poetic, and artistic interpretation of nature and society in favour of matter-of-fact description, and, with it, the rigorous separation of evaluative and emotive dispositions from cognitive and positivistic orientations (Wilson, 1982, 149).

The differentiation theory can be illustrated by looking at the decline of Anglican church buildings in Manchester city centre. In 1900, there were four Anglican churches in the city centre, but there are now only two – St John's was consecrated in 1769 and decommissioned in 1931, while St Peter's was consecrated in 1788 and decommissioned in 1907. St Ann's, consecrated in 1712, and the Cathedral Church, consecrated in 1215, are the only two churches remaining. Moreover, a number of churches within ten minutes' walk of the city centre are now either apartments, offices, centres of worship for other faiths or derelict.

In the early 1990s, it seemed that secularisation was unstoppable, yet only twenty years later an ever fewer number of sociologists fully support the hypothesis (Habermas, 2008, 18; Warner, 2010, 116). Furthermore, in the wake of the not unfounded criticism of the Eurocentric perspective of secularisation, some even talk of the 'end of the secularisation theory' (Joas, 2007, 9-43). It is from here that we can move into what has been termed 'post-secularism'.

Habermas (2008) identifies three reasons why this change in thinking has occurred. First is the broad perception that global conflicts are often presented as hinging on religion, '[which] undermines the secularistic belief in the foreseeable disappearance of religion and robs the secular understanding of the world of any triumphant zest' (Habermas, 2008, 17). Secondly, religion

is gaining influence at the national level as local 'communities of interpretation', for example a local church, mosque or temple, gains influence by making relevant contributions to key issues in public life. Thirdly, 'guest workers' and refugees, specifically from countries with different traditional cultural backgrounds, are stimulating a move towards a post-secular society. In post-colonial countries, such as the UK, the issue of tolerant co-existence between different religious groups is important for social cohesion, as it ensures that religion remains in the societal consciousness. However, before post-secularisation is examined further, one must acknowledge that a post-secular society must have once been a 'secular' one. Therefore, the term 'post-secular' can only be applied to certain countries and societies where the context was once widely perceived to be secular.

Post-secularism starts with a challenge to many of the assumptions of secularism, such as the foundational premise of the link between modernisation and secularisation. The USA challenges this premise, as it remains the spearhead of modernisation and yet has an unchanging proportion of religiously committed and active people (Habermas, 2008, 17). It was long regarded as the great exception in the secularisation trend, yet now it seems to exemplify the norm. Europe, which was once seen as the norm, is not a model that the rest of the world will follow but is deviant, as it follows a different path to the rest of the world. The recognition that modernisation does not necessarily lead to secularisation is a significant shift but one that has grown in influence over the past decade. Alongside this point, Casanova (1994) notes that the trend towards individualisation does not necessarily mean that religion loses influence and relevance, either in the politics and culture of a society or in personal conduct. Religious communities do still claim a seat in public life in Europe and increasingly have an influence in policymaking at both a local and a national level:

> I am thinking here of the fact that churches and religious organisations are increasingly assuming the role of "communities of interpretation" in the public

> arena of secular societies. They can attain influence on public opinion and will form by making relevant contributions to key issues, irrespective of whether their arguments are convincing or objectionable (Habermas, 2008, 19).

Coupled to these three reasons regarding the change in consciousness that has occurred, Habermas (2008, 18) also identifies three overlapping phenomena that are converging to create the impression of a worldwide resurgence of religion, namely missionary expansion, fundamentalist radicalism and the political instrumentalisation of the potential for violence innate in many of the world's religions. It is these three phenomena that Habermas claims have caused the change in consciousness, so they are vitally important.

The first two of these two phenomena are pertinent to the congregations that have been researched for this thesis. A form of missionary expansion is taking place in both communities. The desire to see growth and expansion is part of the narrative of both communities highlighting that they are part of the first trend that Habermas identifies:

> Missionary Expansion: A first sign of their vibrancy is the fact that orthodox, or at least conservative, groups within the established religious organisations and churches are on the advance everywhere. This holds for Hinduism and Buddhism just as much as it does for the three monotheistic religions… Most dynamic of all are the decentralised networks of Islam (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa) and the evangelicals (particularly in Latin America). They stand out for a religiosity inspired by charismatic leaders (Habermas, 2008, 18).

Whilst there is nothing new in missionary expansion, it does represent a significant turn against the disappearance thesis of secularisation. The disappearance thesis states that religion will fade away, whereas missionary expansion is a sign that religion will not behave in the way in which secularisation scholars have suggested.

Habermas's second phenomena, fundamentalist radicalism, is particularly interesting for this thesis as it places together fundamentalist movements in traditional religions, with which I associate King's Church, and the new age movement. The difference that Habermas notes between them is that fundamentalist movements combat the modern world or withdraw from it into isolation, whereas the new age movements exhibit a form of 'Californian syncretism' (2008, 18), which is a particularly interesting reflection with regards to the contextual theology of King's Church.

Habermas's final phenomenon concerns the international role that religion currently plays in politics and the potential for violence within particular regimes: 'The mullah regime in Iran and Islamic terrorism are merely the most spectacular examples of a political unleashing of the potential for violence innate in religion' (2008, 18). Many global conflicts are often coded in religious terms, and whilst the ideology and theology of this are questionable, they serve to raise the profile of religion in the public realm. Habermas and other post-secularists highlight that religion is still very much part of the public consciousness and has not disappeared in the way that many secularists were predicting. However, let us be clear that this is not religious revival but rather religion relocating itself in a changing religious landscape.

Returning to secularisation, one further theory takes account most for some of these changes: the co-existence theory. This theory tries to take account for the fact that there are some forms of religion that are flourishing in contemporary culture. It states that the way religions are faring depends on particular circumstances rather than on a unilinear process:

> Theories of secularisation indicate how religion, and specifically Christianity, relinquishes (and/or is deprived of) its hold on the central structures of power… the question then becomes whether this process is contingent, i.e. dependent on specific circumstances, notably those that have been obtained in Europe, or is a necessary and an inevitable part of social development (Martin, 1990, 295).

Proponents of this theory highlight that whilst in some contexts religion is in decline, there are other contexts in which it is growing. Hence, secularisation is a process that is not a universal global narrative but is bound to particular contexts. Whilst this theory is useful, it still starts with a Eurocentric secularisation assumption which post-secularism firmly challenges. It also does not move beyond secularisation, as it simply states that in some contexts secularisation will take place. This is still a unilinear process and I suggest that this theory, alongside the other theories of secularisation, look slightly dated in today's socio-religious context.

Furthermore, the theory of sacralisation is also an assault on secularisation, as it suggests that secularisation does not represent the whole picture and – contentiously – that there is evidence that a 'rising tide of spirituality... is producing a re-enchantment of the world' (Nelson, 1969, 2).

> The world today... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and is some cases more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled "secularisation theory" is essentially mistaken (Berger, 1999, 2).

It predates post-secularism and offers an alternative narrative to that of secularism. The disappearance thesis of secularisation states that religion will wither and die, but in contrast the sacralisation theory focuses attention on religion gaining strength and growing in modern times:

> Who still believes in the myth of secularisation? Recent debates within the sociology of religion would indicate this to be the appropriate question with which to start any current discussion of the theory of secularisation... Armed with "scientific" evidence, sociologists of religion now feel confident to predict bright futures for religion (Casanova, 1994, 11).

However, merely questioning the secular context does not mean we are in a sacralised context. The questioning of secularisation highlights that we are

entering a post-secular context, and within this context it is claimed that there is evidence of sacralisation. Woodhead and Heelas (2000, 429) identify three sub-theses within the sacralisation thesis that emphasise the reversing fortunes for religion. The first and most simple of the three is growth, which involves a numerical increase as non-religious people join the religion; this numerical growth increases the influence that religion has in a secularised society. The second sub-thesis is deprivatisation, or dedifferentiation, which can be thought of as the conversion of the public realm as secular institutions previously evacuated of religion by modernity come to be re-enchanted by religion. As previously mentioned, the differentiation theory comes into play when religion ceases to be socially significant, hence the dedifferentiation theory is the reversal of that trend. In many ways it is a movement towards a post-secular context:

> Religion in the 1980s "went public," in a dual sense. It entered the "public sphere" and gained, thereby, "publicity." Various "publics" – the mass media, social scientists, professional politicians, and the "public at large" – suddenly began to pay attention to religion. The unexpected public interest derived from the fact that religion, leaving its assigned place in the private sphere, had thrust itself into the public arena of moral and political contestation (Casanova, 1994, 3).

The process of 'going public' may have begun in the 1980s but it continues to the present day. It is questionable as to whether this is sacralisation or post-secularisation, but the assertion that religion 'went public' suggests that at one stage it was not public, which in itself is evidence of secularisation. This 'going public' can further be identified in the role that religion is playing on a global level in a post-secular society as 'communities of interpretation' (Habermas, 2008).

The final sub-thesis is the process of intensification, whereby people who are nominally religious come to adopt stronger, more potent and life-influencing forms of religion. Intensification highlights the increasing importance of

religion for people in contemporary society. A significant example of this is the growth in what has been termed 'the evangelical upsurge':

> The evangelical upsurge is breath-taking in scope... It has gained huge numbers of converts in East Asia – in all the Chinese communities (including, despite severe persecution, mainland China) and in the South Korea, the Philippines, across the South Pacific, throughout sub-Saharan Africa, apparently in ex-Communist Europe. But the most remarkable success has occurred in Latin America; there are now thought to be between forty and fifty million evangelical Protestants south of the US border, the majority of them first-generation Protestants (Berger, 1999, 9).

This evangelical upsurge is similar to the missionary expansion highlighted by Habermas. Intensification highlights the increasing importance of religion for people in certain parts of the world, although not as yet Europe. *Middletown* is a representative middle-American community that was first studied by Robert and Helen Lynd (1929) and latterly by Caplow (1982). From their studies it can be observed that a process of intensification has taken place. Hoover states:

> Every objective indicator – church attendance, church membership and church support, among others – and by subjective indicators as an expressed need for religious faith, the residents of *Middletown* are more religious than their grandparents. Fifty years of life in an industrial community seem only to have strengthened the bonds of religion rather than looensing them (1991, 275).

It is worth noting that *Middletown* is in the United States. For a long time, secularists claimed that the USA was an anomaly in the wider process of secularisation, whereas now in a post-secular context it is claimed that it is secularised countries that are anomalous.

These three themes have a degree of correlation with some of Habermas's (2008) reflections on a post-secular society; however, the difference is the point of origin. As previously mentioned, sacralisation predates post-

secularisation and was largely conceived in a world threatened by the secular worldview. It sought to offer an alternative thesis to the dominant secularisation thesis, but perhaps it did not acknowledge fully the dominance of secularisation at the time. Post-secularism acknowledges that culture has been secularised but that secularism is not the final end point. Partridge (2004, 39) and Berger (1999, 12) claim that secularisation has caused religion to be relocated, a characteristic of which is that it is not a return to the old ways of being religious but is instead the emergence of a new way of being religious – a post-secular way of being religious. Therefore, rather than dismissing the secularisation theory, they recognise that secularisation has created the environment within which sacralisation can thrive. As religions seek relevance they become indistinguishable from the surrounding culture, and consequently they fail to meet the spiritual and moral needs of the community. As a result, sects form and then gradually become more and more routinised, rationalised and secularised – and the process starts again. The significant element within this process is that people are still seeking the sacred, but due to the secular nature of some forms of religion they are seeking different forms of religious life. By embracing the secular modernist world, religions have also embraced rationality. 'Whilst this liberated us from superstition it also leaves us with a dull, one-dimensional, unconvincing world' (White, 2000, 347). This leaves clears the ground for new, post-secular forms of religion to emerge.

I would not be so bold as to claim that Manchester city centre is now a post-secular context and the two congregations post-secular in nature; however, the religious landscape has changed significantly since St. Ann's Church was consecrated in 1712, and arguably the most significant socio-religious changes have occurred in the past 50 years. It is within this changing religious context that both congregations were established, and I would suggest that both are authentic contextual responses to this socio-religious landscape.

2.7: Conclusions

Whilst Manchester city centre has a unique narrative, it is also a city that manifests many of the broader sociological trends that have occurred in Britain in the past fifty years. These trends can be seen in the changing usage of buildings and areas in the city centre. This chapter has helpfully highlighted these broad sociological changes and then established how they are manifest in Manchester city centre. The general has become localised. This thesis now moves forward into my research.

Three of the monuments that I have selected have been used in different ways as the city centre has evolved; the only one that has remained constant is St. Ann's Church. Perhaps this is an appropriate place to draw this chapter to a conclusion, as it raises the question as to whether the Church should be the constant present in an ever-changing landscape or whether it should adapt and change with the culture that surrounds it.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 3 introduces my research methodology, research method and research practice. However, the starting point is my research question: 'What can be learnt from the mission practices that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre?'

The chapter begins by locating my research in the field of practical theology and then within the further discipline of congregational studies. Within this discipline there are a variety of research methodologies, and these are explored before a particular one is settled upon. The chapter introduces my research method and three of the principles that inform my research method: the practice of reflexivity, looking for differences and theoretical saturation. It is from my research method that I then discuss my research practice.

The section that explores my research practice contains the practical details of my research. Included within this are facts such as the dates and timescale of my visits, my practices when visiting, my role as a researcher and how I negotiated access to the church communities. Finally, the chapter explains my methods of recording, analysing and documenting the fieldwork.

3.1: Practical Theology

Practical theology is a discipline that has been described as one which 'aims to understand how God is meditated through human language and culture' (Graham, 2013, 158), and it has certainly seen considerable developments over the past thirty years. Graham suggests that these developments 'have seen a move away from an exclusive emphasis on clergy education towards a more broadly-based focus on adult lay theological formation, influenced by traditions of orthopraxis and virtue ethics which locate theological discourse as quintessentially practical' (2013, 158). This view is supported by Ballard (2000), who claims that it has become one of the 'fastest-growing and most

popular areas within the contemporary theological curriculum' (Ballard, 2000, 60). Ballard suggests that the reasons for this rise in interest are a crisis in the ministerial role, a rise in new skills and paradigms such as psychodynamic thought and counselling, a turn towards practical skills in education and the rise of the laity within the Church (2000, 62-67).

One of the most interesting debates in recent scholarship concerns the capacity of practice to reshape received tradition. Graham claims that Swinton and Mowat (2006) reveal a degree of 'ambivalence over the capacity of practice to reshape received tradition' (Graham, 2013, 160). This ambivalence can be seen in two contrasting statements. Firstly, they argue that 'the primary task of practical theology is not simply to see differently, but to enable that revised revision to create changes in the ways that Christians and Christian communities perform the faith' (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, 5). Practical theology therefore brings about change in the way that Christians and Christian communities live in the world; however, and in contrast, Swinton and Mowat (2006) also claim it cannot change the way that we understand the world: 'Experience and human reason cannot lead us... to an understanding of the cross and resurrection' (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, 5). This debate, which is concerned with whether or not practice has the capacity to reshape tradition, resonates with Bosch's claim (1991, 431) that missiology has been polarised into a debate between truth (theoria) and justice (praxis). Bosch (1991) helpfully brings these two elements together and then adds a third feature – poiesis. Moreover, this debate informs one of the questions that I explore in relation to the two churches where I conduct my ethnographic research (see 3.3).

Swinton and Mowat helpfully identified the practical theologian as an action researcher, a person who facilitates and seeks understanding so that there is practical and transformative outworking. This was further elaborated in *Talking About God in Practice* (Cameron et al., 2010), and it is interesting, particularly for this piece of research, to note that both Cameron et al. and

Swinton and Mowat start by connecting practical theology to the *missio Dei.* The authors state that 'Theological Action Research is a partnership between an insider and an outsider team to undertake research and conversation answering theological questions about faithful practice in order to renew both theology and practice in the service of God's mission' (Cameron et al., 2010, 63). Graham puts this into context by saying:

> They are concerned with the loss of credibility of the churches in contemporary European culture, due to the challenges of continuing secularization. Western civilizations such as the UK see no sign of the slowing, let alone reversal, of decline in organised Christianity and it is against this backdrop of increasing marginalization of religion and religious discourse, and the poor image of academic theology as irrelevant to the vast majority of citizens, that the project was conducted (Graham, 2013, 161-162).

Whilst my research does not employ a Theological Action Research method, there is a clear correlation between the missiological and sociological concerns of Cameron et al. (2010) and my concerns in this piece of research. My first chapter concerns the *missio Dei,* in effect underpinning the rest of the thesis. The second chapter concerns the sociological challenges facing the Church in contemporary Western Europe, in this case as manifested in the city centre of Manchester. This correlation between the work of Cameron et al., Graham and myself can be seen further in the value that both they and I place on practices:

> Practices are bearers of the "living Christian tradition" which evolves in dialogue with contemporary experience. Such practical wisdom is understood as part of the ongoing dynamic of God's revealing life. Practice and experience are thus already theological (Graham, 2013, 163).

It is interesting to observe this significant shift from practical theology simply being shaped by tradition, to practical theology being able to shape tradition. Essentially, this move seeks to bridge two theological disciplines, in order to enable cross-disciplinary theology to emerge. This bridging can also be seen

in the recent rise of the *Ecclesiology and Ethnography Network* (Ecclesiology and Ethnography, 2013a). *Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Ward, 2012) is the inaugural volume in the series of *Perspective on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, and the first chapter of the volume seeks to bring together the two disciplines, which is congruent with the tone of the network, as it seeks to develop cross-disciplinary scholarship into the study of the Church:

> Ecclesiology, as employed by theologians, is deeply rooted in a doctrine of the triune God, and so it seems to take its sources "deductively" from the Holy Scriptures, the tradition of the church, and its liturgy. Ethnography, as employed by social scientists, is rooted in observing the life and practices of a specific group of human people and drawing conclusions "inductively" from them… one might reflect with the poet Chaucer on "the life so short, the craft so long to learn," and conclude regretfully that there is just not enough time to become skilled in two disciplines to the extent that it would be productive to integrate them.
>
> Despite all this, the present volume is the first in a series bridging ecclesiology and ethnography, and it is my contention that it is actually essential for theology to attempt to bring the two disciplines together (Fiddes, 2012, 14).

Traditionally, missiology has been understood as subset of ecclesiology,[4] and therefore the desire to bring together the discipline of ecclesiology and ethnography has helpful ramifications for my piece of research. As this chapter unfolds I will elaborate on how I employed an ethnographic research method and thus why I understand my research to sit clearly at the interface between ethnography and ecclesiology. However, within this area there is also a clear crossover between congregational studies and ethnography and ecclesiology, with Phillips (2012, 106) acknowledging the vital role that congregational studies plays in the bridging process:

[4] The rise in the doctrine of the *missio Dei* has meant that many, including myself, would no longer treat missiology as a sub-category of ecclesiology. Mission is part of the character of God rather than being an activity of the Church, and hence an ecclesiologically-centered view of mission does not reflect the character of the God of mission revealed through the *missio Dei.*

> I am suggesting that more theologians who are writing on war and peace should spend more time in war zones, with the victims of war, with soldiers, with peacemakers. More theologians who are writing on the environment should visit sites of particular environmental concern, environmental groups, anti-environmentalists. And more theologians should spend time deeply engaged with the lives of particular Christian congregations (Phillips, 2012, 105).

Within the discipline of congregational studies are a variety of both methodologies and methods; however, the *Ethnography and Ecclesiology Network* places particular emphasis on an ethnographic approach. Practical theology has been an encouragement to congregational studies by insisting that theology must be done not 'from above' but 'from below'. The congregation becomes the core site of Christian experience; a good example of this approach is Browning's *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (1991). Of which Woodhead, Guest and Tusting (2004) say:

> This advocates a theological method which begins with a description of the congregation and the situation in which it finds itself, goes onto examine relevant resources from the tradition, and ends with a conversation between the two. The book itself contains studies of a number of congregations to illustrate the method proposed. In the UK, Graham's *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (1996) develops Browning's work from a feminist and postmodern perspective by arguing that attention to the practice of the faith-community can form the basis of a feminist pastoral theology (Woodhead, Guest and Tusting, 2004, 8).

To answer my research question I conduct a comparative ethnographic study of two congregations and alongside this I examine relevant resources from their tradition, I then bring those two sources into conversation with one another.

My ethnographic research specifically focuses on 'mission practices' and hence this is a phrase that needs definition. In chapter 1 I introduce *The Five Marks of Mission*, which provide a broad and helpful framework through which

mission practices can be understood. The five marks are not a definition of mission but are arguably closer to five practices of mission – in many ways they are five complementary mission practices:

Mark/Practice 1: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
Mark/Practice 2: To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
Mark/Practice 3: To respond to human need by loving service.
Mark/Practice 4: To seek to transform unjust structures of society.
Mark/Practice 5: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth.

My research question focuses on mission practices, and the five marks of mission provide a framework through which to analyse these mission practices. Underneath each of the five marks, or practices of mission, there are many subsidiary practices. For example, a subsidiary practice of mark 1 – 'To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom' – could be to knock on people's doors and tell them about Jesus. The activities that I am considering as mission practice for this piece of research are subsidiary practices of the five marks of mission.

3.2: Method and Methodology

It is important to first define the terms 'research method' and 'research methodology', as they are often mistakenly used synonymously and interchangeably. There is, however, a difference between a research method and research methodology:

> Methods are specific techniques that are used for data collection and analysis. They comprise a series of clearly defined, disciplined and systematic procedures that the researcher uses to accomplish a particular task... Methodology is connected to method, but in a particular way. The term "methodology" has a number of different meanings. Formally it relates to the

> study methods. More broadly, the term methodology has to do with an overall approach to a particular field (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, 74-75).

It is helpful to tease apart the difference between the research method and the research methodology. In essence, the research method is the design and the actual practice of research, whereas the research methodology is the rationale for that particular approach. The methodology is therefore more philosophical, as it involves how we know about the world and how we gather data. Central to devising both the correct research method and methodology is the research question. From my research question the field of studies can be discerned, and from this field a methodology is sought that is both credible and reliable. As previously mentioned, the field of studies within which my research is located is congregational studies, and it is from within this field that a methodology is identified.

3.3: Congregational Studies and Research Practice

The first significant congregational studies in the UK appeared in the 1950s (Woodhead, Guest and Tusting, 2004, 2), and as a discipline it has seen a great deal of development since that time. This development is perhaps best charted in *Congregational Studies in the UK* (Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 2004). In the chapter entitled 'Taking Stock', the editors survey and then produce a typology for congregational studies. This typology draws primarily from congregational studies in the UK and includes books, articles and PhD theses. The typology divides congregational studies into two main categories and then a number of subcategories. The two main categories are intrinsic and extrinsic congregational studies. The authors say of these categories:

> Extrinsic congregation studies are those whose study of a congregation or congregations has some broader good, such as the concern to assess the role of congregations in the generation of social capital, or a desire to enrich theological reflection with "congregational voices." Intrinsic are the study of

> congregations for their own sake and for the sake of understanding them (Woodhead, Guest and Tusting, 2004, 2).

The authors claim that most congregational studies can be placed within one of these two subcategories. It is helpful to recognise these two subcategories as ideals, but in practice there can be a blurring between categories; for example, it can be the case that an intrinsic congregational study has some extrinsic outcomes. However, the authors recognise this fact, so I find the two categories useful in particular in the placing of my piece of research, which whilst located in extrinsic congregational studies has some intrinsic outcomes. For example, during my ethnographic research with King's Church, a meal was put on for the homeless community, called the V.I.P. night (see section 4.9). At first glance this could be placed within the extrinsic category of congregational studies, as the congregation is seeking to bring a broader good to the city centre community. However, part way through the meal it became clear that one of the goals of the meal was to draw those homeless people into the church community, which raises questions as to how the activity was viewed and consequently how the congregation understand themselves. Therefore, what initially seems like an extrinsic study raises interesting reflections that are more intrinsic than extrinsic.

In congregational studies, there are various motivational factors for research. In the 1950s the initial motivation was communitarian:

> Many shared the assumption that community was in danger of breaking down under the pressures of modernisation, particularly rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Attention therefore turned to congregations as exemplars of community, as 'intermediate institutions' whose health was intimately bound up with that of a civil society, and as places where claims about the breakdown or survival of community could be tested (Woodhead, Guest and Tusting, 2004, 2).

The motive in these early congregation studies was to understand and to help to preserve healthy human community. There were two different sorts of congregational study that took place under the communitarian agenda, one was secular in origin and the other Christian. The aim of secular bodies such as *The Institute in Community Studies* was to influence public policy in the post-war political climate. The second sort of congregation study was both Christian in origin and motivation. It shared the view that society was breaking down but saw the solution not in public policy but in Christian churches. Woodhead, Guest and Tusting identify that the intention in one significant study in this area was to 'inspire other clergy, and thereby spearhead a movement of community renewal in church and wider society' (2004, 4).

Within extrinsic congregational studies there are a variety of sub-categories and the sub-category of church growth is where this piece of research can be located. This subcategory has its roots in American evangelical Protestantism of the 1950s, with Woodhead, Guest and Tusting stating that the 'desirability of church growth is axiomatic within the evangelical worldview, with each new individual brought into the church representing another soul brought within the ambit of salvation' (2004, 5). Research in this field is concerned with what factors cause both church growth and church decline.

Three other categories: organisational studies, church-health and theological are also part of extrinsic congregation studies. Strictly speaking the theological category is not a sub-category of extrinsic congregational studies but part of the aforementioned (section 3.3) growth in practical theology that evolved in parallel with extrinsic congregational studies. The category of church-health is one that focuses on how the health of congregations can be improved. The underlying focus being on congregations developing in a non-directive way through the empowerment of their members. The church-health approach seeks to offer an alternative to what can be seen as a mechanistic and evangelical church-growth approach. Whilst the categories of church

growth and church-health tend to emerge from active church members, the category of organisation studies tends to be derived from university departments of management science. The focus of organisational studies is on the internal operation of the congregation. It derives from the underlying assumption that congregations are governed by the same principles as other non-religious organisation and hence should be subject to the same kind of analysis.

My research can be located in the extrinsic subcategory of church growth studies, and within this subcategory two further types are identified. The first type is based on empirical evidence on which prescriptions for growth are suggested. This is usually based on data gathering and statistical evidence. The second type is one that observes the implementation of church growth principles and then draws conclusions thereon. The two churches that I studied can be placed within this second category, as they are aligned with particular movements (*Fresh Expressions* and *Restorationism*) that have been implemented to promote church growth. My research question concerns the mission practices of two churches within these two movements. However, mission is broader than church growth (see page 9), yet the second mark of mission – 'To teach, baptise and nurture new believers' (Anglican Consultative Council, 1990, 101) –highlights that church growth is indeed part of mission. It is extremely helpful to locate my research in a particular area within the broader field of congregational studies, as by doing so an appropriate research method can be sought.

With regard to the aforementioned research methods, one of the two categories observes a congregation and draws from that a prescription for growth, whereas the other looks at the implementation of a church growth principle and draws conclusions therefrom. However, there is also a methodological difference between the two approaches. Typically, the first approach employs a quantitative research method and the second a qualitative method (examples of this qualitative approach would include

Chamberlain, 2010 and Taylor, 2005). A quantitative research method is often systematic in its approach to a research subject, and within the field of church growth this usually includes a significant amount of measurement, which tends to be statistically-driven and measures factors such as attendance levels, age profile and length of attendance. Perhaps the most significant example of this is the *Religious Trends* statistics. This research has been published by *Christian Research* since 1972 (Christian Research, 2012a) and measures church attendance from the *English Church Census*. The second method is the qualitative approach, the following definition of which is offered by Denzin and Lincoln:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (2005, 3).

These two approaches, both within the sub-field of church growth, methodologically have different aims – one seeks a snapshot of change whilst the other studies the dynamics of the congregation, not necessarily just for the purposes of church growth strategies. There are also major ideological differences between the two approaches, perhaps the most significant being the importance placed on 'rich descriptions' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, 12). For the qualitative researcher the rich description is vital, as it is within these rich descriptions that conclusions are sought, whereas for the quantitative researcher these rich descriptions are seen as disruptive to process of developing generalisations. Due to the nature of qualitative research it is likely that the researcher will come into contact with the everyday world of the group that is being researched, which is viewed in a positive way because

it provides a broader base for the research. For example, in ethnographic research into a church, this will involve spending a set time period with that church community. During this study period the researcher will hear the sermons, have conversations with church members and observe a number of services, and through this they gain a broader understanding of the church community. However, due to the personalised nature of religion, complete access is impossible because a researcher can observe behaviour and share experiences but cannot experience a person's thoughts and emotions; they cannot experience the internal religious experience. So whilst the researcher may understand what is happening and the meaning thereof, it is impossible for them to know the exact thoughts passing through the minds of the participants in the ritual. Therefore, as Firth (1999) says, 'anthropological inferences about religious belief, as distinct from religious behaviour, must always be approximate' (Firth in McCutcheon, 118, 1999).

My research uses a qualitative methodological approach, which has been adopted for a variety of reasons, but the strongest is the focus of the research question on mission practices. Mission practices are not easily measurable, and if they were measured the exercise would provide very little material to reflect on and from which to draw conclusions. For example, a quantitative researcher could measure the number of Christian enquiry courses, such as *Alpha*, that a church runs over the course of a year. However, understanding the reasons why a particular course was chosen will reveal more about the theology of mission within the church which in turn shapes their mission practices. This level of understanding can only be achieved through a qualitative approach. To understand fully a church and its mission practices it is important that the researcher has direct experience, in that they encounter the people, their stories and their worldviews. Whilst this can be achieved in a limited way through a quantitative method, it is often through chance encounters that subtle underlying threads appear, and it is these views that I wish to encounter.

I therefore employed an ethnographic research method. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) state that ethnography involves:

> A deeper immersion in others' worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important... Furthermore, immersion enables the fieldworker to directly and forcibly experience for herself both the ordinary routines and conditions under which people conduct their lives (Emerson et al., 1995, 2).

An ethnographic research method enables the researcher to have first-hand experience of a particular community, as they are immersed in that social setting. For the question I am seeking to answer, this first-hand experience is vital because 'What can be learnt from the mission practices that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre?' is comparative in nature and invites the researcher to compare the mission practices of new congregations; therefore, I use a comparative research method which involves using a more or less identical method in two cases and then comparing the findings. However, there are a number of principles that inform my research method, the first one of which involves looking for differences.

Manchester city centre has many church communities – *Manchester Cathedral* is the oldest and there are many new churches starting up each year. There are also many different denominations represented – the *City Centre Churches Forum* has representation from The Anglicans, Methodists, Roman Catholics, The Society of Friends and The Unitarians, and there are also many free evangelical churches. Due to the comparative nature of my research one principle that informs my research method is the desire to see diversity within the area of church growth. Nevertheless, the diversity that I seek is also limited to the particular field of church growth. As 'church growth is axiomatic within the evangelical worldview' (Woodhead, Guest and Trusting, 2004, 5), it is within the evangelical worldview that my two church communities are located.

Nonetheless, even within this particular worldview, differences can be found. The two congregations that I selected for this piece of research fit broadly into this category but represent two different approaches to church growth. Moreover, they are exemplars of two of the more significant movements in church growth in the last thirty years, *Restorationism* and *Fresh Expressions*. The differences between these two movements are significant, perhaps the greatest being that *Restorationism* is theologically and ideologically anti-denominational (see section 4.2), whereas *Fresh Expressions* (see section 5.2) works within the established denominations to bring about church growth. The ecclesiology of these two church growth movements is significantly different, so by default the forms of church that emerge are also different. Alongside this point, it becomes clear as my thesis develops that the approaches to mission and theology of mission are very different in the two churches.

The second principle that informs my research method is the practice of reflexivity. It is now taken for granted that a good ethnography should be 'reflexive', but what exactly does that mean? At its most fundamental level, reflexivity describes the capacity of any system of signification, including a human being – an ethnographer – to turn back upon or to mirror itself. Thirty years ago, Ruby's edited volume, *Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology* (1982), confirmed the arrival of reflexivity into the discipline of ethnography. It was proposed as a corrective measure to a mode of ethnographic writing in which factual material was presented by a detached author-narrator whose methods of fieldwork and data collecting were not always manifest, and who did not address the effect of her or his presence on others, much less the various effects that others may have had on her or him. The principal of reflexivity is one that underlies my research practice and will inform my research method. In *Women's Faith Development* (2004), the principle of reflexivity informs Slee's research method. She writes:

> In practice, the principle of reflexivity has much to do with transparency as about the research process, and is evident in the way in which research is both conducted and written up, bringing to visibility the commitments of the researcher and the conditions under which knowledge is constructed. It is expressed in such practices as writing oneself in first person into the research account; being honest about aspects of research traditionally rendered invisible such as mistakes, error or dead-ends, and building then into the research so that they become avenues for further enquiry (Slee, 2004, 52).

Reflexivity has much to do with transparency in research and reflectively responding to unexpected turns that will occur within the research field. Nevertheless, transparency is not simply a value adopted in the field; it starts with the researcher reflecting honestly on who they are as a person before they enter the field. This is particularly important in the field of religious study, as the personal beliefs of the ethnographer can be highly significant. All social anthropologists studying religion will have some basic assumptions about the nature of the religious phenomena, which may be atheist, humanist or of a religious nature, and these basic assumptions will have a significant bearing on the research. However, alongside this there are the very basic facts about a person, such as gender and ethnicity, which significantly influence the way that people engage with the researcher. So before I turn to my basic religious assumptions there are other facts that first need to be shared.

The most significant fact is also the most obvious fact to anyone who meets me: I am a white Western male in my late thirties. In some contexts this is advantageous, but in others it can marginalise. I was particularly conscious of my ethnicity when selecting which religious communities to research; for example, if I chose to research a black majority church my ethnicity would have been a significant, and perhaps insurmountable, barrier because I would have always been the 'outsider'. With regard to my basic assumptions on the nature of religion I am a practising Christian and a Priest in the Anglican Church.

With the practice of reflexivity it is important that I am transparent with regard to my experience and understanding of the two churches that I research. The first church that I research, King's Church (see section 3.3), is one with which I am uncomfortable for many reasons. My initial discomfort comes from my pastoral experience of counselling people who have left this type of church, and I have first-hand experience of the pastoral damage that this type of institution can do to certain people. Alongside this pastoral experience I disagree with their belief in an inerrant Bible and I struggle with their conservative morals. However, I also find it quite fascinating that this church, which in many ways is marked by differences to prevailing cultural norms, has seen significant growth in the past thirty years. It is important that I acknowledge my personal bias but still maintain my clarity of purpose in researching the mission practices of this relatively new church, as my task is not to critique this form of religion theologically but rather to research their mission practices. Ward (Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 2004, 125) acknowledges that ethnography is often 'messy', and it is this messiness that we can see here. Ward writes of an experience as a researcher where a change in incumbent effectively meant that she was no longer welcome. Within this process she found herself siding with the congregation and at this point withdrew from the field. In the initial process of negotiating access she had defined her purpose with the previous incumbent but the change in incumbent created a conflict of interest. Ethnography can be a messy experience, and whilst the form of religion will have a considerable bearing on their mission practices, my primary focus, through my research question, is on mission practices, so I hope that through this I maintain clarity within the messiness.

The second church I research is *Sanctus1* (see section 3.3), which I established in 2002 and led until 2009. The research period took place in early 2009, so this was whilst I was still leading the church. As a result, I set a clear and firm timetable regarding the research period and the researcher's role over that time. However, whilst that time period can be bounded clearly,

I approach this church community in a very different way to the way that I approach King's Church. As I founded Sanctus1 it reflects many of the values that are personally and theologically important to me – and which are very different to the values of King's Church. I therefore acknowledge that I have a personal bias in favour of Sanctus1. However, I question whether total neutrality is ever possible due to unconscious personal bias inherent in all of us, as our thought-patterns and sensitivities are shaped by our personal religious attachments or aversions.

In *Finding Their Own Way* (2011), Chamberlain offers conclusions drawn from ethnographic research into two church communities, one based in Manchester and one in Liverpool. One of the church communities that he researches is a church that he established and leads, and of this he says:

> My personal connection, though carrying certain potential complications in the recording of observations, of which I was conscious throughout, is also one of the key strengths and unique insights of this piece of research (Chamberlain, 2011, 11).

It is interesting to note that Chamberlain identifies this as one of the key strengths of his fieldwork. He later identifies that due to his personal connection with the church community he has unprecedented access to the community that he is researching, thus enabling him to see below the surface of the church. Yet, this unprecedented access is only of value if the researcher is disciplined in their role and clear boundaries are established and maintained. Regardless, there will always be a certain messiness to ethnography, as Ward (Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 2004, 125) highlights, and this messiness can be magnified by close involvement with the community being researched. It is important therefore that I maintain my defined role in my research period to provide clarity within this messiness. Yet, despite this clearly defined role, there was one evening (see page 72) that was particularly 'messy' because the event did not proceed as planned

and I felt that I moved out of role for particular pastoral reasons (I offer further reflection on this in section 5.6).

The third principle informing my research method is theoretical saturation, which concerns the most appropriate way to sample participants. There is considerable discussion on the most appropriate way to achieve this sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), with the place of sampling being dependent on the role that the ethnographer has adopted within their research methodology. For example, it would be inappropriate for a covert ethnographer to distribute a questionnaire to the people they are researching. Hence, alternative sampling methodologies have evolved, and for the purpose of this piece of research an alternative sampling methodology known as *theoretical sampling* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, 45) will be adopted. Theoretical sampling 'is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, 201). Theoretical sampling starts with the research question, which is followed by data collection and is then analysed until a 'theoretical saturation' point is reached. A theoretical saturation point is reached when no additional data is being found, and the researcher is seeing similar instances over and over again. Through this repetition the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. According to Glaser and Strauss difference is vital for saturation to be achieved: 'Saturation can never be attained by studying one incident in one group…the sociologist should try to gain saturation by maximizing differencing amongst groups. In the process, he generates his theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, 64). Difference is hence maximized in this piece of research by selecting two congregations that have a very different ecclesiology.

Within this piece of research there is one dominant question for which a hypothesis is being sought: What can be learnt from the mission practices

that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre? In order to answer this question a number of sub-questions will be explored. These questions, which have arisen through my reading and research into contemporary missiology and mission practices (see chapter 1) and for which answers are sought are:

Question 1: What relationship does this congregation have with culture?

This question seeks to define the model of contextual theology that the community employs and how this informs their mission practices. It explores the ongoing dialogue surrounding contextualisation and what attitudes exist within the two churches towards the culture of Manchester city centre. For example, does the community have a hopeful relationship with culture or is its relationship peppered with suspicion?

Question 2: Are the mission practices of the congregation dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy?

As discussed in chapter 1 (page 14), mission practices have been based historically on the desire to share a right belief (orthodoxy). However, with the rise in Third World contextual theology there has been a greater priority placed on praxis (Bosch, 1991, 422), this then became the starting point for mission rather than orthodoxy as the context became more significant. In 2003, the term orthopathy was coined, and it seeks a missiology that is focused on right feeling rather than right thought or right actions. This question explores the prioritisation of orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy in the two churches researched.

Question 3: What is the role of theoria, praxis and poiesis in this congregation?

Bosch (1991, 431) claims that contemporary missiology should seek to bring together theoria, praxis and poiesis (see page 14). This question explores the relationship between these elements in the mission practices of the two churches within this study. Furthermore, this question seeks to explore whether the mission practices of the two congregations fuse these elements together, or whether there is an overemphasis on a particular one.

Question 4: Does the idea of community play a significant role in the mission practices of the congregation? If so, which model of community and how is it significant?

Bosch identified that the 'universal claim of the hermeneutic of language has been challenged by the hermeneutic of the deed' (1991*,* 427). Mission is no longer merely about language, but much more importantly about deeds outworked through community. There are a number of different models of community, such as an alternative community, a cloakroom community, an intentional community, an ethnic community or an imagined community (see Bauman, 2000, 169-201; Brueggemann, 2001, 1). This question will seek to explore which type of community is emerging and how this influences the mission practices of the church.

Through the exploration of these four questions a 'theoretical saturation' of the mission practices of both congregations will be sought.

3.4: The Research Practice

This section is twofold. Firstly, it introduces the two churches and secondly it documents the research practice, which includes the recording of data, gaining access, the length of time spent in the field, my practice in the field and, importantly, the different ethical considerations raised by each community.

The first church that I research, King's Church, was established in 1986 and relates to a wider group of ministries known as *Ministries without Borders.* On the church website they recognise the founder of *Ministries without Borders*, Keri Jones, as being 'given by God to carry apostolic authority towards us as a church' (King's Church, 2008a). It is part of the wider restorationist movement of which Walker says:

> Restorationists wish to restore or return to the New Testament pattern of early church… Restorationists see themselves as evangelicals and Pentecostals, but in a new, radical mould… Restorationists believe that the Church should be run by divinely appointed apostles, prophets and elders. Furthermore, they hold to a doctrine of "discipleship," or "shepherding," whereby church members submit themselves to those deemed to be their overseers and spiritual counsellors (Walker, 1998, 40).

At the time of the fieldwork, King's Church was led by five male elders and its members numbered approximately eight hundred people. The King's Church website says about itself:

> Members of King's Church are ordinary people living in Greater Manchester who have discovered that the best person in all the world is Jesus Christ. We freely and willingly say that to love him is to obey him and follow his direction for our lives. This relationship with Jesus Christ is the foundation of all we see and believe as a Church. We are unashamed to say that we believe Jesus Christ, God the Son, rose from the dead and is alive today and is loved by many in Manchester (King's Church, 2008b).

King's Church has seen significant growth since it was first established in 1986. It has a high profile in the city and is the largest non-denominational evangelical church in Manchester city centre. Their website and my experience of them showed a clear commitment to mission, and alongside this King's Church is emblematic of a significant movement in church growth in the United Kingdom. All of these reasons mean that I believe that King's Church was the correct choice for my first piece of fieldwork.

My fieldwork at King's Church took place between 7th January 2008 and March 16th 2008, a ten-week time period, during which I attended a Sunday service once a week and all activities that related directly to mission. This included full participation in a Mission Week that started on 10th March and ended on 16th March (including prayer and training events) and attendance at a V.I.P. night for homeless and vulnerably housed people in Manchester.

I negotiated access to King's Church by emailing its office and requesting a meeting. Here is the email:

> I'm an Anglican minister in Manchester and am passionate about seeing the Church grow and new people come to faith.
>
> As part of this passion I've began a piece of research into why some churches grow; what is it about them that is attracting people and what can be learnt from them? As part of this process I've identified King's Church, Manchester, as one of the most rapidly growing churches in the city.
>
> I'm therefore wondering if it would be possible to come and spend some time as part of your congregation and get involved with a few things, really so that I can get a feel for King's Church. Obviously, I want to do this with your permission and therefore I'm wondering if there is anybody who I can talk to about this? (Fieldwork Diary, King's Church, Introductory Email).

I decided to be overt in my identity as a researcher for the purposes of transparency, but this raises questions regarding the language that I used when disclosing my identity. Language is key in gaining access, so in this introductory email I play up my credentials in a bid to gain access. The email had the desired effect and I received a reply and had a meeting with one of the church's elders. However, during the meeting the elder raised some concerns. My fieldwork diary says:

> The most interesting point of the conversation centred on my involvement with King's Church. There was a degree of concern as to what this meant, and I said that I'd like to be there to observe, to get involved and to listen to people

> as they talk about King's Church and mission. The elder was fine with this, but voiced a concern regarding how involved I could get.
>
> He stated that I could not be a public face of the church at any point, unless I was willing to commit to their core beliefs and values, but I was welcome to attend. However, if I had questions, doubts and uncertainties about anything that happens I should not share them with other church members but simply keep my counsel. If I shared them, this could be to the detriment of the church family (Fieldwork Diary, 11th December 2007).

I agreed to the elder's requests and access was granted for a three-month period. He suggested a number of events that I could attend, and he welcomed me at the first service I attended. In gaining access, Bryman identifies that the ethnographer may need to 'pass tests' (2004, 299), and it appears that in this meeting I passed the tests that were set for me and access was granted.

After this first meeting I emailed the elder to record what we had agreed. This email included the dates of the research period, the research question, their right to withdraw and my commitment to keeping the anonymity of church members. I did not at this point gain permission from the elders to use their full names, and in earlier drafts of this thesis their full names were included. Due to my reflexive research practice I now recognise that this was an error and I have now used pseudonyms throughout.

The greatest challenge during this research period was not as a researcher but as a fellow Christian. As a researcher I realised that I was defining myself as an outsider and so was prepared for this; however, as a Christian who is social liberal and Anglican, I felt excluded from this particular church community. This was manifested in a number of ways, such as the style of worship, the sermons that were preached and my further reading into the role of denominations within Restorationism. At this point I am simply

acknowledging this discomfort in my desire to be reflexive in my research practice.

Sanctus1, the second church that I researched, is an initiative of the Anglican Church and is associated with the *Fresh Expressions* (Archbishops' council, 2004) programme of the Anglican and Methodist denominations. It was established in 2002 and offers creative holistic ways of worship and seeks to build community in the city centre. It has been studied on a number of occasions and is regarded nationally as a model of good practice. It is also featured in a number of books, including *Mission-Shaped Church* (Archbishops' Council, 2004), *Emerging Churches* (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005) and *Church on the Edge* (Stoddard and Cuthbert, 2006). When researched it had approximately fifty members, a mixed gender leadership team and was seven years old.

Due to the aforementioned publicity, Sanctus1 has a high profile in the city and is the only *Fresh Expression* in Manchester city centre. The church's website and my experience thereof show a clear commitment to mission, and alongside this Sanctus1 is emblematic of *Fresh Expression* in the UK. The mission practices that Sanctus1 employs are very different to those of King's Church, so I believe that Sanctus1 was the correct choice for my second piece of fieldwork.

My fieldwork at Sanctus1 took place from 9th February 2009 until 26th April 2009. Once again, this was a ten-week experience in the field, during which I attended all their services and was involved in a mission project called '40 Days of Public Solitude'.

Negotiating access was a different experience, as I did not have to 'play up my credentials', but importantly I emailed the leadership team to request permission to do the piece of research. Here is the email:

> As you all know, I'm currently engaged in a piece of research into the mission practices of religious communities, and one of the communities that I'd like to research is Sanctus. It would be really helpful for me if, firstly, I can get your permission to do this, and then secondly we can talk about how we manage this within Sanctus1 (Fieldwork Diary, Sanctus1, Introductory Email).

Following my email we spoke at our next team meeting, during which we agreed the research period and I shared the research question, told them of their right to withdraw and my commitment to keeping the anonymity of church members, which would be achieved by anonymising members in all written materials. This was in line with what had been agreed with King's Church. Specifically to Sanctus1 we spoke about how we would manage my pastoral and leadership responsibilities during this time period. I agreed with the leadership team that I would be clear with the members of the church about the research, so we decided that I would email all of them (via the email distribution list) to let them know of my role as a researcher, the research question and the research time period. We also decided that at the start of each Sanctus1 session during the research period I would remind people of my role as a researcher. We also agreed that outside of these defined research times I would not be in the role of a researcher, unless the people that I was with had agreed to it beforehand.

Whilst my role as both researcher and leader was clearly defined, there was one particular evening in my research where I think that I moved temporarily out of my role as researcher and into leader. This was towards the end of the research period at Sanctus1, and my fieldwork diary reads:

> It was a strange evening and not what had been planned. However, I think that it was also a very important evening where we thought about the future direction of Sanctus1 and how we want to develop. People commented that it was a really important discussion and that there had not been many like this in Sanctus1 for a long time (Fieldwork Diary, 1st April 2009).

The evening was quiet (17 people), so the people moved their chairs into a circle and a conversation started spontaneously about participation in Sanctus1. This was an important conversation for Sanctus1 to have, and it was also important for me as the leader to contribute to that conversation. The conversation simply continued and filled the evening. People commented at the end of the evening how important the conversation was for them and Sanctus1. This was not the plan for the evening and I contributed as the leader of the community rather than as a researcher.

I have reflected on this experience and I had the choice either to remove the material from my fieldwork or to keep it in and be transparent about my confusion over my role during this evening. I decided to keep the material in, as the conversations included important comments from Sanctus1 members about their identity and their understanding of mission. Alongside this the Sanctus1 community was fully aware of my role as a researcher during this conversation, and therefore whilst I personally experienced discomfort in the role I undertook, there was still clarity for the members of Sanctus1.

3.5: Role, Recording, Managing and Analysing the Data

Whilst conducting my ethnographic research there were a number of different roles that I could have adopted. Gold (1958) classifies the ethnographer into four roles: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer. The role that I took throughout my research was that of the participant-as-observer. This role is similar to the complete participant, but the members of the social setting are fully aware of the researcher's status as a researcher, and it is therefore not a covert role. I was clear with the members of Santcus1 that I was a researcher for the set time period and I was introduced to the congregation at King's Church as a researcher. The main danger with this role is the risk of over-identification, although the main advantage is the opportunity to get close to people and understand the community.

The recording of information was a vital task during the research, but I was also aware that it was a task that could serve to alienate me from my research subjects. The openness of the jotting depends on the context, and Emerson et al. note that 'fieldworkers must constantly rely upon interactional skills and tact to judge whether or not taking jottings in the moment is appropriate' (1995, 23). Open jotting can place strain on a relationship and can also distract the ethnographer from paying close attention to the talk and activities occurring in the setting.

I followed the same recording of information process in the two churches that I researched, in that I would take a small notebook with me to the service or meeting that I was attending. I found this helpful, as it served to remind me of my role as a researcher, which was particularly helpful in Sanctus1. I would then at various points jot in this notebook – these jottings were not extensive, but they were reminders of key moments or quotes that I heard. After every activity attended during the research period I would then retreat to write a full account of the gathering and my initial reflections thereon. However, other than my initial reflections I did not at this point start the analysis of the data. After my fieldwork was complete I left the data for approximately one month before starting to process it. My aim in the processing of the data was to produce a coherent and focused analysis of the mission practices of the church, in order to enable me to answer my research question.

The time period between the two pieces of research was slightly over one year. The first piece of research started in January 2008 and the second piece started in February 2009. This time frame enabled enough space to process and draw conclusions from each congregation separately, before using the questions in 3.2 as the base for the comparative study.

As previously mentioned, after a month I would return to the data and my first task was to read through the text. There was a considerable amount of data, so reading the complete corpus was an important step that enabled me

to re-engage with the material and also start the process of reflection. I had developed a number of hunches and theories whilst in the field, and the process of reading through the notes in a more detached way enabled me to see whether these hunches were evident in the fieldwork notes.

My second step was a much closer reading of the text, where I started to code the text for ongoing use. This initial coding process was twofold; firstly I was looking for formulas, ideas and themes within the text. My previous reading into the background of the two church communities meant that I approached the data with some prior knowledge, and whilst keeping the fieldwork as my priority, I was also looking to see if any of this prior knowledge was evident in my fieldwork. Secondly, alongside this process of open coding I was also categorising my notes into specific areas. For example, there were activities that happened every week and activities that were one off. An example of a weekly activity in King's Church is the sung worship at the beginning of the service. This time of sung worship used songs from a particular tradition and had a certain formula to it. By placing this worship into one category I was able to identify it as a normative part of the worship experience at King's Church, so when something out of the ordinary happened within this category attention was drawn to it. It also enabled me to see how this was prioritised within the life of King's Church and draw conclusions from therefrom; yet, within this process of categorisation, further analysis was needed, particularly with the teachings or sermons that took place within both churches. A great deal was revealed in this one category about the theology and understanding of mission, so this therefore required more focused coding.

This focused coding took place in two areas, firstly in the teaching and secondly in any of the mission practices that took place during my fieldwork. However, if there were other important reflections on mission outside of these two areas, I also included these in my focused coding. My focused coding was a more intense analysis of the theology and practice of mission within the

church, and it identified a number of ideas and themes which provided the basis for my analysis of the data. However, as the data was so expansive I used memos that I integrated into the text, thus enabling me to see easily themes emerging. In practice this involved writing memos in the text in different colours, meaning that I could look through my fieldwork notes quickly and visually identify and connect different themes. The themes that I deduced can be seen in the conclusions that I have drawn from the two communities; for example, with Sanctus1, one of the themes that I identify is 'obliquity', and in King's Church I identify the theme of being bounded. These two themes can be seen in my memos in my fieldwork diary.

My final task in the processing of the data was to produce theory from the field notes. The challenge within this process was to achieve the correct balance between existing theory and fieldwork, so my approach involved giving priority to my fieldwork and yet making sure that my conclusions were fully informed by existing theory. This process is thus a dialogue between theory and fieldwork, but as my goal was to generate theory out of my experience, the strongest voice in the dialogue was my fieldwork. The theory that I generated can be seen in the conclusions that I drew from each community.

There is, however, one further step that I took, and this concerns the comparative nature of my study, which returns to my research question: 'What can be learnt from the mission practices that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre?' For the comparative study I returned to the questions (section 3.2) that I sought to answer and the memos that I had made in my fieldwork diary. This process was simple, as I took one question and then through the thematic memos that were in my text I sought answers to these questions. The conclusions that I draw from these answers can be seen in the final chapter of the thesis.

In summary, this chapter has firstly sought to locate my research in the field of practical theology and within that the discipline of congregational studies. Through my experience of research and the conclusions I draw I believe that congregational studies is the correct discipline within which to locate my research. The focus on practices in my research question is particularly helpful in locating my research, as it is from reflection on these practices that conclusions are drawn. This is significant, as the practices are the primary shapers in the conclusions. Therefore, both the methodology and method must enable these practices to be primary, which I believe both the methodology and method have achieved.

My choice of an ethnographic research method enabled me to experience the differences between these two congregations and their approaches to mission. Through this and the four questions I sought theoretical saturation. I think that I achieved this aim in part, but this could have been complemented by other methods such as focus groups or interviews. However, my reticence to use interviews and focus groups was due to my desire to work directly with the practices rather than with the perceived understanding of these practices. This was challenging and produced data that needed significant decoding, but I was able to achieve this requirement due to my background reading and wider knowledge of both these congregations and the movements with which they are associated.

I now move on to the decoded data. I first draw conclusions on the mission practices of each congregation before then returning to my four questions from which I draw three conclusions on the mission practices of both congregations.

Chapter 4: King's Church

This chapter looks to answer my research question with regards to King's Church, Manchester. The conclusions that I draw in this chapter are based on my ethnographic research into this congregation that took place from January to March 2008.

The chapter begins with a historical and theological study overview of the development of fundamentalist evangelicalism, as this is where my thesis locates restorationism – and hence King's Church. It is through the lens of this particular form of religion that the central notion of a bounded ecclesiology is developed, and it is from this bounded ecclesiology that congruent mission practices emerge.

Three areas are developed with regard to the mission practices: a bounded ecclesiology, a bounded pneumatology and a bounded eschatology. My thesis identifies that a central notion in the mission practices of King's Church is boundary crossing, yet this boundary is threefold, in that it is an ecclesiological boundary connected symbiotically to an eschatological boundary. This eschatological boundary is in turn connected symbiotically to a pneumatological boundary, which serves to create an eschatological ecclesiology that shapes the mission practices emerging from King's Church and the restorationist movement.

4.1: Making Jesus Famous!

Emblazoned on the sides of buses, billboards and the advertising hoardings of Greater Manchester is an advert for King's Church. The vibrant advert features an ethnically diverse group of smiling happy people with the phrase 'Making Jesus Famous!' located centrally on it. The advert invites the reader to visit the website www.makingjesusfamous.org. The 'Making Jesus Famous

Campaign' is King's Church's latest marketing strategy and is based on a central strand of their vision:

> God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centred on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure. And this is His plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in Heaven and on Earth (Ephesians 1:9-10. New Living Translation).
>
> God has called his people, the Church, to be part of seeing this plan fulfilled. He has filled each of us with the Holy Spirit, empowering and enabling us to represent Him in all His love, power and authority. We refer to this as "Making Jesus Famous" (King's Church, 2008a).

King's Church is located at the southern end of Manchester city centre in a large building that backs onto Oxford Road (a major thoroughfare into the city centre along which both universities are situated). The well-presented building includes offices, a café space, conference rooms and a main worship auditorium that can hold seven hundred people. Each Sunday, two congregations gather, one at 9:30 and a second at 11.00, with approximately eight hundred people attending the two services. Many nations of the world are represented at the services and the church is growing rapidly.

King's Church was established in 1986. It is not part of any particular denomination but relates to a wider group of ministries known as *Ministries without Borders.* Welsh restorationist Keri Jones, brother of the late Bryn Jones, leads *Ministries without Borders*, which evolved out of *Covenant Ministries International* (CMI) established by Keri and Bryn Jones in the 1980s as part of the wider restorationist movement.

Restorationism has its roots in the late 1950s, and for some (Walker, 1998) it came to an end in the early 1990s. Originally, restorationist churches were called 'House Churches', as they met in people's private homes. However, they soon outgrew these venues and started to rent or buy more substantial

premises. Bebbington states that their origins can been traced 'to groups of independent evangelicals, mostly brethren in background, whose leaders held a series of conferences in Devon in 1958 to consider how to restore the pattern of church-life found in the New Testament' (Bebbington, 1989, 230). They were anti-denominational by definition and their ablest spokesman, Arthur Wallis, set out their views in *The Radical Christian* (1981). Restorationism is now largely internationally recognisable as *New Frontiers International* under the leadership of Terry Virgo, and *Ministries without Borders* under the leadership of Keri Jones. In *Restoring the Kingdom* (1998), Walker charts the rise of the restorationist movement, in which he identifies restorationism as an ideal type with restorationists seeking to:

> Restore or return to the New Testament pattern (as they see it) of the early church. The restoring of the church as it was in its pristine form is to restore a charismatically ordained church, and one in which Christians are seen as living in a kingdom run according to God's order and rules (Walker, 1998, 40).

Walker identifies two different groupings within restorationism: Restoration One (R1) and Restoration Two (R2). R1 is the most conservative faction of the two (however, there are no major doctrinal differences), but the first significant difference is in leadership inasmuch that R1 is identifiable around a core of recognised leaders, their churches and personnel – Keri Jones, Tony Morton and Terry Virgo – while R2 does not have the same structure of leadership and is therefore more diffuse. However, the main difference between the two movements centres on a split in 1976 that caused some to leave, these people are now R2. Walker says: 'Members of R2, in short, are not enthusiastic about the restorationist label, because they do not wish to be seen as too closely identified with R1' (Walker, 1998, 42). In section 4.2, I explore the history of restorationism and identify some of the reasons for the split.

King's Church, Manchester, and the restorationism movement are part of the wider evangelical movement. It is broader than just one denomination and

has influenced many existing churches during, and since, the eighteenth century. There was considerable continuity with some early Protestant traditions, but evangelicalism was the new phenomenon of the eighteenth century:

> Evangelical apologists sometimes explained their distinctiveness by laying claim to particular emphases. The evangelical clergy differed from others, according to Henry Venn in 1835, "not so much in their systematic statement of doctrines, as in the relative importance which they assign to the particular parts of the Christian System, and in the vital operation of Christian doctrines upon the heart and conduct."... The tone of evangelicalism permeated nearly the whole of the later Victorian religion outside the Roman Catholic Church, and yet the evangelical tradition remained distinct. It gave pride of place to a small number of leading principles (Bebbington, 1989, 2).

The four principles that emerged in the eighteenth century became the marks of the evangelical religion, and today they form the quadrilateral of priorities that is its basis. These four marks are *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed, *activism*, the expression of the Gospel in effort, *Biblicism*, a particular high regard for the Bible, and *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. At different times in the history of evangelicalism a different mark has gained priority; for example, in 1944, Max Warren, General Secretary of the *Church Mission Society*, gave priority to *conversionism* (Bebbington, 1989, 4). Nonetheless, by 1978, John Packer was prioritising the supremacy of scripture in his six evangelical fundamentals (Packer, 1978, 20).

However, far from being narrow and tightly defined, there is breadth and diversity within contemporary evangelicalism, which was highlighted with the publication of *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Chalke and Mann, 2003). The book, written by two authors, one a prominent evangelical, questioned *crucicentrism* and in particular penal substitutionary atonement, which opened up significant debate within evangelicalism on the subject. This

breadth is further evidenced by Fackre (1983, 191-2), who identifies six distinct sub-communities within the evangelical stream: fundamentalist evangelicalism, old evangelicals, new evangelicals, justice and peace evangelicals, charismatic evangelicals and, finally, ecumenical evangelicals. Each of these different sub-communities has a slightly different emphasis, with fundamentalist evangelicalism being the one that correlates most closely with King's Church:

> Fundamentalist evangelicals hold unswervingly to "biblical inerrancy," the belief that the biblical text, being inspired by God, participates in the quality of divine life to the extent that it is without "errors" of any type. The Bible is not only theologically true therefore, but literally true at every point on whatever it deals with, whether nature, history or doctrine (Wright, 1996, 6).

The term 'fundamentalism' has its roots in the *Niagara Bible Conference* (Baker, 2005, 337), officially called 'Believers Meeting for Bible Study'. This conference gathered annually from 1878 to 1897 (with the exception of 1884) and sought to define those doctrines that were fundamental to belief. They produced a 14-point statement of faith, known as the 'Niagara Creed', which amongst other doctrines was one of the first documents to proclaim explicitly faith in the pre-millennial return of Christ. In 1910, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church passed a resolution stating that all officers of the Presbyterian Church of the USA must believe certain essential and necessary doctrines – the five fundamentals (Fahlbusch, 2005, 547), which were a condensing down of the original 14-point Niagara Creed. The doctrines chosen were those that were under attack by modernists at the time, namely:

1. The inspiration and consequent infallibility of the Bible
2. The virgin birth of Christ
3. The substitutionary atonement of Christ
4. The physical resurrection of Christ
5. The miracles of Christ (Fahlbusch, 2005, 547).

It is important to recognise the contextual nature of the five fundamentals, as the evangelical church was being threatened by a modernist liberal agenda and this was their response. A second response was a collection of 12 books on five subjects published between 1910 and 1915 by Milton and Lyman Steward – two Southern Californian oil millionaires – called *The Fundamentals*. This series of essays was meant to be a 'Testimony to Truth' (Marsden, 2006, 118), and the promoters and financial backers sought the 'best and most loyal Bible teachers in the world' (Marsden, 2006, 118). Whilst the public response to these books was not as great as the authors had hoped (Marsden, 2006, 119), they did have significant long-term effects, as they have become a symbolic reference point for the fundamentalist evangelical movement.

As the century evolved, three strong characteristics of Christian fundamentalism emerged:

> (a) A very strong emphasis on the inerrancy of the Bible, the absence from it of any sort of error;
> (b) A strong hostility to modern theology and to the methods, results and implications of modern critical study of the Bible;
> (c) An assurance that those who do not share their religious viewpoint are not really "true Christians" at all (Barr, 1984, 1).

With regards to King's Church, the church states publically:

> The Bible (Holy Scripture) is the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God to all people at all times… it is the supreme source of truth and is a completely reliable revelation of God. The Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and doctrine (King's Church, 2008b).

On the criteria of 'Biblical inerrancy', King's Church, Manchester correlates with Fackre's (1983) definition of fundamentalist evangelicalism. However, Barr (1984) suggests that the defining feature of fundamentalist churches is

not simply straightforward biblical inerrancy but the way in which the religious tradition controls the interpretation of the Bible:

> The core of fundamentalism lies not in the Bible but in a particular kind of religion. Fundamentalists indeed suppose that this kind of religion is theirs because it follows as a necessary consequence from the acceptance of biblical authority. But here we have to disagree and say that the reverse is true: a particular type of religious experience, which indeed in the past was believed to arisen from the Bible, has come to be itself dominant. The religious tradition on the one hand controls the interpretation of the Bible within fundamentalist circles; on the other hand it entails, not as its source but as its symbol and as an apparently necessary condition of its own self-preservation, the fundamentalist doctrine of the Bible. In other words, fundamentalism is based on a particular kind of religious tradition and uses the form, rather than the reality, of biblical authority to provide a shield for this tradition (Barr, 1984, 11).

Barr's argument is significant, as he highlights the relationship between biblical inerrancy and ecclesiological control within fundamentalism. The two aspects are symbiotic, gaining power and identity through each other, and the religious tradition upholds biblical inerrancy and the Bible upholds the religious tradition. This symbiotic relationship develops into ecclesiological fundamentalism whereby those Christians who do not share their views on ecclesiology and, symbiotically, the Bible are not seen as Christians. This is an important point of definition, as it is ideologically exclusive. The natural progression of a symbiotic relationship between ecclesiological fundamentalism and biblical inerrancy is that those who do not agree with the ecclesiology, and by definition the Bible, are outside of the church and, arguably, damned.

A further defining factor within fundamental evangelicalism is the second coming of Christ before the end of time, which was first defined for evangelicals in the Niagara Creed. This pre-millennial eschatology believes that Christ will reign on Earth for a thousand years after the second coming.

This contrasts with a post-millennial eschatology which sees Christ's second coming as occurring after the millennium – a Golden Age of Christian prosperity and dominance. The eschatology within R1 ecclesiology sheds light on the role of millennialism in its ecclesiology and highlights how, in many ways, eschatology is, after the Bible, the second most significant thread in R1 ecclesiology:

> The Restorationist adventism is essentially post-millennial, but millennialism is not an essential theme in their vision of the last things. Christ will return when the Church is perfect and the Kingdom restored... Whether He will then reign with the saints for a thousand years, or whether Christ's historical return heralds the end of time is less clear... The essential thrust of their adventism, however, is the establishment of a mighty Kingdom of God prior to the return of Christ (Walker, 1998, 141).

The ecclesiological focus of their eschatology is furthered in the writings of Bryn Jones, a founder member of the restorationist movement and a previous apostle to King's Church:

> Dispensational pessimists depict the present evil age as being in the terminal stages of self-destruction. They hold out to us no other hope than the coming of Christ to rescue His people from the final death throes of humanity... Conversely, many post-millennialists see a gradual Christianizing of the nations until the whole world and its structures become the Kingdom of God... According to them, we are now moving into the ever-increasing light of the age to come. Neither the optimist nor the pessimist is right...
>
> Christ is not coming to save a beleaguered church from being overthrown, but for a triumphant church that has overcome all its enemies, advanced His kingdom across the earth, and reaped the greatest worldwide harvest of lost souls the world has ever seen (Jones, 1999, 36).

This is a post-millennial eschatology. However, the significance of restorationist eschatology is not in its eschatology but in its fundamentalist ecclesiology, which holds within it a post-millennial eschatology – an

ecclesiology of a powerful church that stands as a beacon offering paradoxically both hope and judgement. This ecclesiology takes priority over eschatology, as it is the church that ushers in the eschaton. Restorationist churches perceive themselves as the focal point of God's final chapter in the history of his people, and this post-millennial theology can be seen clearly on the King's Church website:

> Contrary to the thinking of many Christians, Jesus is not going to return at any moment and snatch the defeated church away from this world. He must remain in Heaven until the restoration of all things, which includes a restored church, healthy and vibrant, united in faith and purpose. It will be a church which has made herself ready as a bride prepares for her bridegroom (King's Church, 2008c).

Again, there is a symbiotic relationship, this time between ecclesiology and eschatology. The church ushers in the eschaton, and therefore to bring about the eschaton believers must be part of the church, as the two are linked intrinsically to one another. Barr notes the claim that '[t]hose who do not share their religious viewpoint are not really "true Christians" at all' (Barr, 1984, 3), and therefore those who are not part of their church are not going to usher in the eschaton. The natural progression of a symbiotic relationship between ecclesiological and eschatology is that those who do not agree with their ecclesiology are outside of the 'true' church.

A helpful tool for this thesis is Wallis' (1976, 13) typology of religious organisations. The typology identifies four contrasting ways of organising religious beliefs and behaviours through an emic-etic framework. The etic axis ascertains whether a religious organisation is perceived to be respectable or deviant, whereas the emic axis ascertains whether the organisation perceives itself as uniquely or pluralistically legitimate. Through this four contrasting religious organisations are identified, which are: Church, Denomination, Sect and Cult. On the etic side the sect and the cult are both identified as deviant. The difference between the two is on the emic side; the sect perceives itself

as uniquely legitimate whereas the cult perceives itself as pluralistically legitimate. Through my research it is clear that King's Church, and the wider restorationist movement, perceive themselves as uniquely legitimate.

In the typology an organisation that perceives itself as uniquely legitimate is either a church or a sect and this is qualified by how they are viewed externally. Externally are they viewed as respectable or deviant? Externally King's Church is not legitimised by a recognised denomination and *Ministries Without Borders* (the organisation that King's Church is associated with) is not a partner church of *Church Together in Britain and Ireland*, therefore I am placing King's Church in the sect category of Wallis typology. Of this category Wallis says:

> Although there is no general agreement on the range of meaning of the term 'sect', a certain minimal consensus exists that the concept has to do with groups, organized around a common ideology, which in a variety of ways cut themselves off from, or erect barriers between themselves and the rest of society...Despite their many divergences, all these groups have two central characteristics in common. Firstly, they are each organized around a belief-system held by their adherents to offer some unique and privileged means of access to truth or salvation. Secondly, they are each concerned with producing and maintaining a thoroughgoing transformation in the identities of those recruited to them (Wallis, 1975, 9).

It is helpful to reflect back on the restorationist movement to observe how this organisational type has evolved.

4.2: History

An exploration into the history of the restorationist movement reveals more about the relationship between eschatology and restorationism. In 1971, Wallis, author of *In the Day of Thy Power: the Scriptural Principals of Revival* (1956), called together a group of young free-church leaders and evangelists to discuss eschatology. This soon became a series of meetings with an

agenda that moved from eschatology to restorationism. The group were soon convinced that God had separated them to be apostles in his end-time church (Walker, 1998, 76) (highlighting at this very early stage the link between ecclesiology and eschatology). The seven leaders, soon to be known as 'the magnificent seven' (Walker, 1998, 77), were Arthur Wallis, Peter Lyne, David Mansell, Graham Perrins, Hugh Thompson, John Noble and Bryn Jones, who, according to Walker (1998, 115), was by the late 1970s the most powerful man in restorationism. The group met three times and formed a covenant together before inviting a further seven men to join the group – the Fabulous Fourteen.[5]

> The self-selection of the "*fabulous fourteen*" led to the establishment of a charismatically ordained leadership. This leadership was legitimated by an appeal to members to recognise the *de facto* leadership that had already emerged. Bryn Jones, for example, is an apostle, so the argument went, because he acts like an apostle... In a sense, the "*fabulous fourteen*" had ordained each other not in any formal ceremony, but in mutual recognition of ministry, prophecy and laying on of hands (Walker, 1998, 79).

The years 1972-74 saw the gradual establishment of a leadership structure, and it was between 1973 and '76 that the 'restored kingdom' as a vision arrived, which calls for a return to the New Testament Church, particularly at the time of Pentecost – a time when there were mass conversions, healings and people being raised from the dead. According to *Restoration* magazine (Matthew, 1983, 40), the church went into decline after the New Testament canon ended, and it reached its lowest point in approximately 600 AD and stayed there until the Reformation in the 1500s. The radical Reformation is significant for restorationists because it is a time when the supremacy of scripture and the practice of adult baptism recovered:

> With the reformation came a rediscovery of justification by faith. God used the reformers to disentangle this vital truth from a doctrine of salvation by works

[5] It is worth noting that this is an exclusively male group. This is ideological and continues in the leadership of King's Church.

> that had obscured it. About the time this new light began to beam forth in Europe, companies of Christians practicing the baptism of believers by immersion appeared in Germany and elsewhere (Wallis, 1981, 34).

The Reformation is perceived to be the start of the recovery of the Church. This continued through the next 300 years with the formation of denominations such as the Methodists, Salvation Army, Brethren and Baptists. These denominations are seen as positive stepping-stones towards a restored kingdom. The twentieth century is a time of further forward movement with the recovery of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts and the rise of Pentecostalism, starting with the Azusa Street revivals. The vision of a restored kingdom develops all these facets and envisions a Church beyond denominations, where New Testament patterns of leadership are practiced and where Pentecostal manifestations of the Spirit are commonplace:

> We do not seek to return to an original condition; rather, we seek to advance to the fullness of God's original intention. Ours is not the backward looking nostalgia, hoping to find dubious mythological perfection in the early Church… Nevertheless, implicit in the letters of the apostles to the churches were strong moral and spiritual principles that are the foundation of every authentic Christian community. It is these elements that modern-day Restorationalism seeks to recover as part of the process of advancing the Church to its fullness and maturity (Jones, 1999, 15).

The 'Fabulous Fourteen' were drawn to and energised by this vision, believing that it was God's eschatological vision for the end-time church. They mutually recognised the ministries and vocations of one another and established a covenanted relationship between themselves as they sought a vision for a worldwide church.

However, this was a short period of togetherness, and in October 1976 there was a split in the restorationist movement. It is from this point that we see R1 and R2 developing. It is hard to specify the exact reason for this split, but in part it came down to an uneasy alliance between some of the Fabulous

Fourteen. The London Brothers[6], Graham Perrins, John Noble and Peter Lyne, represented one side and Bryn Jones and Arthur Wallis headed the other side. There were personality clashes – partly due to the old-style Puritanism of Wallis and Jones – a clash in apostleship and disciple styles and simply different ways of working.

> Given these tensions, personality clashes and differing styles of working, it is not surprising that 1975 and 1976 saw the emergence of public differences on a series of quarrels that was to end in bitterness and division. The specific issues involved in the split were the publication of *Restoration* magazine in 1975; the debate over grace over law and grace that centred around the practice of masturbation; the David Mansell problem;[7] and the "Spirit of deception" letter that came from Arthur Wallis and Bryn Jones to the southern and western leaders of the "Fabulous Fourteen" (Walker, 1998, 92).

In October 1976, Wallis wrote a letter to the London Brothers in R2 which disassociated him from a number of their attitudes and practices. This letter was seen as being written by both Wallis and Jones, and the London Brothers were deeply hurt by the accusations made against them. The letter was the straw that broke the camel's back, in that the uneasy peace was shattered and the Fabulous Fourteen ceased to exist. For those within R1 this was not a major catastrophe – they were doing well and this was a move to strengthen their hold on the restoration movement in the UK. Jones published a new magazine called *Restoration* in direct competition with *Fullness* magazine, and this was seen as a declaration of independence by Wallis, Jones and R1.

For the purposes of this study the development of R2 will not be followed any further due to the historic roots of King's Church being found in R1. The late 1970s saw R1 grow in many ways, and Bryn Jones, Keri Jones, David

[6] The London Brothers were a group of men gathered around John Noble who organised the 1971 *Festival of Light* – a call to seriousness in the Evangelical tradition. It was an attack on the disorder of the secular world and it evoked a moral response from house church leaders. The London Brothers were Gerald Coates, Terry Virgo, George Tarleton, David Mansell and Maurice Smith.

[7] In 1976, the London Brothers discovered that 'David Mansell's private life was not totally glorifying the Gospel' (Walker, 1998, 97).

Tomlinson and Terry Virgo were now lead figures and following the teachings of Arthur Wallis. However, it was Bryn Jones who was the public face and the driving force behind the movement.

A number of factors contributed to the growth of R1 over the next decade. The first factor was Bryn Jones buying a large dilapidated house in 1977 in Bradford, which was reshaped and became the base for the *Church House Community Fellowship*. This house boasted worship and recreation facilities for over 500, and a congregation quickly grew to fill the venue. It is now the mega-church, 'Abundant Life', one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the UK. Terry Virgo took inspiration from this initiative and bought an old church building in Brighton, which was renovated and drew a congregation which grew into another mega-church, 'The Church of Christ the King'. From this success Virgo went on to found the *New Frontiers International* movement – 'A worldwide family of churches, together on a mission with over 700 churches in over 60 countries' (New Frontiers, 2008a).

A second factor in the development of R1 was the establishing of *Riddlesden College* in 1980 as the first restorationist training college in the UK. It was based in Keighley, Yorkshire, and trained people for leadership. After ten years it moved to *Kettle Hill* in Coventry and changed its name to *Covenant College*. It saw 180 students graduate through its doors between 1990 and 2002. In 2002, the school moved to South Wales and was *renamed Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word.* The *School of the Word* moved to King's Church in September 2008, the principal also being an elder at King's Church.

A final factor in the growth of R1 was the *Dales Bible Week Christian Conventions*, which became the shop window for restorationist teaching and worship. After attending these events, many fellowships and congregations became restorationist. They started in 1978 and by 1981 were attracting approximately 8,000 residents per week. They were a great success, but in

1982 Bryn Hughes made the surprise decision to dismantle the *Dales Bible Weeks*.

Some early cracks started to emerge in the leadership of R1 in the early 1980s, the most serious of which was the defection of Dave Tomlinson and his churches to R2. This defection became obvious at the *Dales Bible Weeks* of 1982 when Tomlinson was not on the leaders' platform. He was being sanctioned for dissent by Jones and was also removed from the editorial board of *Restoration* magazine. Tomlinson felt that 'R1 had adopted a fortress mentality and was turning its back not only on Christendom, but also on the whole of modern culture' (Walker, 1998, 119). In 1985, Bryn and Keri Jones, Terry Virgo and Tony Morton – the remainder of R1 – went their separate ways. This was not an acrimonious split but it was presented as a releasing of different individuals into separate ministries. Bryn and Keri Jones formed *Covenant Ministries International* (CMI), its purpose being to establish and encourage a network of restorationist churches around the world. *Covenant College* became a central thread within this ministry, with *Accelerated Christian Leadership Training Seminars* being offered for those too busy to study for intensive periods of time. During this time, the *Abundant Life Church* in Bradford grew rapidly and churches across the north of England began to associate themselves with CMI. In 1985, King's Church Manchester was established by a Dutch Evangelist, *Goos Vedder*, under the apostleship of both Bryn and Keri Jones.

R1 evolved and was now recognisable as two new church movements: *New Frontiers International* and *Covenant Ministries International* – renamed *Ministries without Borders* in 2005. During the next ten years these two of church families continued their rapid international growth. In September 2003, Bryn Jones died in his sleep and Keri Jones became the sole apostle for CMI:

> Keri Jones…pioneered a number of churches in his native South Wales… Bryn and Keri Jones are merely carrying on a long tradition in Welsh Pentecostalism where brothers have often worked together… Keri Jones is a very thoughtful and warm personality… in my opinion, he is a leader to watch for the future (Walker, 1998, 175).

Keri Jones became the apostle to the churches that were part of CMI, including King's Church: 'We recognise Keri Jones as being given by God to carry apostolic authority towards us as a church' (King's Church, 2008d). In 2005, CMI changed its name to *Ministries without Borders*:

> Ministries without Borders is not a denomination or even just a network of churches. Ministries without Borders speaks of Christian brothers and sisters working together to see the whole world filled with the good news of the rule and reign of King Jesus. It's about all of us using the gifts, talents and abilities that God has given us to see our world transformed by the love and power of Christ. He has called us to go into every nation and there are no borders, boundaries or limits that can prevent us from fulfilling the commission He has given (King's Church, 2008e).

The particular history of King's Church has not been documented, so I am reliant on oral accounts of the history of the church. One problem with this is that there are only a small number of original members who are currently part of King's Church. The elders act as gatekeepers to these people, so access to them proved to be difficult. However, the basic facts are that King's Church was established in 1985 by a team of people led by *Goos Vedder*, a Dutch evangelist who felt called by God to plant a church in Manchester. *Vedder* led the church for ten years and it grew rapidly; during this time they purchased the current church building on Sidney Street. On two occasions the church has divided the congregation and established smaller congregations around Greater Manchester, in locations such as Wythenshawe and Bury. However, both times the experiment was unsuccessful and ended with the congregations coming back together as one flock. For the past five years there have been two Sunday morning congregations, one meeting at 9:30

and the other at 11:00. The church now has over eight hundred people attending their services each week.

4.3: The 'Truths'

In 1983, an article was published in *Restoration* magazine called 'Church Adrift' (Matthew, 1983, 40). The article sought to highlight the 'truths' that had been recovered by restorationism in the twentieth century. As well as highlighting that restorationism sees itself as uniquely legitimate, the article also provides a useful chronological point of definition. The central thrust of the article is that the eight truths revealed how restorationism was God's final chapter in history, and from this eschatologically-charged perspective it is possible to identity some of the defining features of restorationism. The eight recovered truths are:

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. The return of the gifts of the Spirit for both corporate and individual life.
3. A belief in a worldwide end-time revival.
4. The restoration of apostolic and prophetic ministries as a major means of bringing about the unity of the Church.
5. The establishment of apostolic teams to supplement and complement the works of apostles.
6. The growth of disciple practices, under godly leaders, in local churches.
7. A recognition that denominations are not in God's plan, and ultimately they are not renewable.
8. New freedom in worship and praise (Matthew, 1983, 40).

This list of eight truths, the eight central theoria, identifies boundaries that are already defined within restorationism. This list can be divided into three theological groupings: ecclesiology, eschatology and pneumatology. Points one and two are pneumatological, while point three is eschatological, and finally points four, five, six, seven and eight are ecclesiological (point eight could be placed in any of the three categories, highlighting the importance of

worship in the vision of a restored kingdom). The eschatological dimension of the vision of a restored kingdom has already played a significant role in this chapter, so the two remaining elements, pneumatology and ecclesiology, will be developed further, which is important as they relate directly to the mission practices of King's Church.

Pneumatologically, the vision of a restored kingdom draws extensively from the Pentecostal movement. Wallis writes: 'Not till the dawn of the twentieth century was there a significant and permanent breakthrough concerning the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. This came through the Pentecostal movement' (Wallis, 1981, 31). The Pentecostal movement is interpreted as the start of the 'second rain' of the Spirit, which was due to happen just before the end-times. The 'first rain' is understood to be the original coming of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2). The 'second rain', which started with the Azuza Street revival and evolved into the charismatic movement, was seen as 'a few showers of blessing before the real deluge' (Walker, 1998, 138), which would involve God restoring the church to its original splendor. Included within this would be charismatic manifestations of the Spirit, such as miraculous healings and people being raised from the dead. Invocations for charismatic manifestations of the Spirit are part of the common practice of King's Church, which can be observed in practice at their services and is also expressed on their website:

> The more we live practicing the laying on of hands, the more miraculous healings we are going to experience, and it does not have to be in the meeting. You can lay hands on sick people in their home, your home, on the bus, in your school or workplace or hospital, because we believe we will see more and more manifestations of miraculous healings (King's Church, 2008f).

The vision of a restored kingdom links eschatology intrinsically to pneumatology; however, there is a further significant overlap in the three aforementioned categories, which can be seen in the baptismal theology of restorationism that links them together. Wallis (1981) links baptism in the

Spirit with baptism in water: 'When Paul talks about "one baptism" he is embracing both Spirit and water baptism. Together they comprise the one baptism into Christ... the two baptisms are one' (Wallis, 1981, 32). Baptism in the water has traditionally been a membership ritual for the church; hence, by linking the two together, baptism in water and the Spirit become prerequisites for a member of the restored church. As pneumatology is examined further with the restorationist tradition, it becomes clear that the aforementioned fundamentalist ecclesiology is conjoined with restorationist pneumatology. The Holy Spirit brings about the revival of the Church, people are baptised in the Spirit into that revived church and the revived church ushers in the eschaton. It seems that the three elements – eschatology, ecclesiology and pneumatology – all submit to a fundamentalist ecclesiology, and it is to this that we now turn.

Three clear ecclesiological areas have emerged, both from the 'eight truths' in *Restoration* magazine and from my research into restorationism. These three ecclesiological areas are apostolic and prophetic ministries, place of denominations and pattern of discipleship. These three areas will be expounded on to give more definition to the aforementioned fundamentalist ecclesiology.

The first area is apostolic and prophetic ministries. The foundational scripture for both the church order and apostolic and prophetic ministry within restorationism is Ephesians 4: 8-12. The key verses are 11-12:

> The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (New Revised Standard Version).

This has been referred to as the 'five-fold ministry', and within the vision of a restored kingdom this is the only New Testament pattern for church leadership. Jones says that two of these gifts are seen as 'key ministries to be

restored at this historic juncture in God's plan of restoration. They are apostles and prophets' (Jones, 1999, 117). One cannot help but note the self-referential nature of this statement, as it is written by a man who was an apostle in the restorationist movement. However, within the vision of a restored kingdom, apostles are not optional extras but are vital for the church to grow and flourish:

> Can we do it without apostles? The answer very much depends of what we are aiming to build… [I]f we want to see the church come to the fullness and stature of Christ, to a mature man, it is essential for all the gifted men mentioned in Ephesians 4 to have their place in our church (Virgo, 1985, 137).

Apostolic ministry within restorationism is the most clearly defined of the Ephesians 4 ministries, in that apostles are not chosen by individual congregations but are called and then appointed by Christ. They have many tasks, including '[breaking] new territory in the world and [strengthening] and [establishing] the Church of God when everything in the world is shaking' (Jones, 1999, 127-8). R1 consists of a number of different groups of churches that are accountable to a particular apostle:

> Each apostle is responsible for a chain of churches. While each chain is separate, they are linked together at the top by a mutual recognition amongst the apostles. The apostles, then, have separate areas of responsibility, agreed territorial boundaries, and considerable – though not total – autonomy… In R1 the leading apostles are Bryn and Keri Jones… Terry Virgo… and Tony Morton (Walker, 1998, 174-5).

Jones contrasts this point with the established church, which is seen to have replaced apostles and prophets with 'archbishops, cardinals, bishops and executive boards' (Jones, 1999, 117). Prophetic ministry is significantly prioritised within restorationism. In church services, for instance, there is often time for members of the congregation to share publically a prophetic

word with the wider congregation[8] – an elder decides whether this particular prophetic word should be shared with the congregation. Whilst there is a focus on the prophetic word in services, there are only a small number of people who are recognised as prophets within restorationism. Jones describes prophets as 'People of God's presence... People of perception... People of revelation... People of confrontation... People of demonstration... People of motivation... People of perseverance' (Jones, 1999, 134-6).

The vision of a restored kingdom orders the church in a different way to tradition denominations, in order, it is claimed, to follow the biblical model of church structure and order. As well as prophets and apostles there are elders, teachers and evangelists within the list of ministries recognised in restorationism. It could be suggested that these ministries are simply a renaming of traditional denominational ministries; however, due to the anti-denomination stance of the ecclesiology of restorationism, this suggestion would not be recognised. Point seven in *Restoration* magazine is 'a recognition that denominations are not in God's plan, and are ultimately unrenewable' (Matthew, 1983, 40). This damning exclusive critique of denominations is based on an eschatologically-charged ecclesiology that sees denominations as slowing down the forthcoming *eschaton*. This notion can be seen in the following quote, which reveals a patronising approach to those who are part of established denominations:

> I see no future for denominations because I don't find them in the Heavenly blueprint. They are contrary to God's declared purpose for his church in this age. But I do see a glorious future for the people of God, many of whom are currently in denominations. There are some reading these pages who should leave the churches with which they are associated, and need to seek God earnestly as to where he would have them planted (Wallis, 1981, 67).

With reference to the Wallis typology the internal conception that the restorationist movement is uniquely legitimate can be seen clearly in the

[8] Restorationists believe that a prophetic word is a message for the congregation that is given to a particular person by God.

above quote. The ecclesiology of the restorationist movement, which defines itself as the final chapter in history, is linked to eschatology and pneumatology. This has a significant effect on the mission practices of restorationist churches and in this case King's Church, and it is to this congregation that we now turn.

4.4: Mission Practices and a Bounded Missiology

Through my ethnographic research it became clear that central to the mission practices of King's Church is that it operates as a 'well-formed bounded set' (Hiebert, 1994, 111), and it is this boundedness that defines its mission practices. A bounded set is a category within mathematical set theory. In *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, Hiebert (1994) applies set theory to ecclesiology and missiology and identifies two variables when first defining a set. The first variable is whether a set is intrinsic extrinsic:

> *Intrinsic sets* are formed on the basis of the essential nature of the members themselves – on what they are in and of themselves...
>
> *Extrinsic, or relational, sets* are formed, not on the basis of what things are, but on their relationship to other things or a reference point (Hiebert, 1994, 110-111).

A further variable, which involves boundaries, is pertinent when thinking about the mission practices of King's Church:

> *Well-formed sets* have a sharp boundary. Things either belong to the set or they do not. The result is a clear boundary between things that are inside and things that are outside of the category.
>
> *Fuzzy sets* have no sharp boundaries. Categories flow into one another. For example, day becomes night, and a mountain turns into a plain without a clear transition (Hiebert, 1994, 111).

These two categories are then combined and result in four sets: intrinsic well-formed (bounded) sets; intrinsic fuzzy sets; extrinsic well-formed (centred) sets and extrinsic fuzzy sets (Hiebert, 1994, 110-136). Hiebert then applies each of these set theories to Christianity, ecclesiology and missiology. From correlating Hiebert's work with my ethnographic study it can be ascertained that the one which corresponds most to King's Church is the bounded set.[9] A bounded set has certain structural characteristics to it: it has clear boundaries, in that one cannot be half-in and half-out – one is either fully in or fully out (Hiebert, 1994, 112-113). Secondly, to belong to a set one must conform to its essential characteristics; for example, a red pen cannot belong to a set of green pens, as essentially it is red and not green. Within a bounded set these essential characteristics are uniform, and therefore this uniformity of essential characteristics means that the group is homogenous. Bounded sets are static, so once inside the group and conforming to the essential characteristics there is little movement – the only movement is to the outside of the set. Analysing my ethnographic study it is 'boundedness' that defines the mission practices of King's Church, and the bounded nature of their ecclesiology, eschatology and pneumatology is the most significant factor in shaping their mission practices. This next section will define the bounded missiology through these three areas, and then correlate this with the practices of mission and evangelism observed in my ethnographic research. However, part of my analysis has established that these three areas of theological identity cannot be compartmentalised neatly, because they are reliant on each other and feed into one another. They are connected symbiotically in a cyclical way, thus creating a 'chicken and egg' causality dilemma: does the Spirit usher in the church, which then ushers in the *eschaton*? Or, is it because we are close to the *eschaton* that we have particular manifestations of the Spirit, which bring with them a new ecclesiology? Or, has the return to New Testament patterns of church

[9] The opposite of a bounded set is a centred set, which is created by defining a centre or a reference point and the relationship of things to the centre. Things related to the centre belong to the set, and those that are not related to the centre do not. Boundaries within centred sets emerge automatically through the relationship that things have to the centre.

ushered in the 'second' or 'latter rain' that is highlighting our proximity to the *eschaton*? Central to my analysis is that these three elements of the restorationist identity are connected so closely that the mission practices which emerge do not focus primarily on one but are shaped by all three.

A further point of definition within the static tightly bounded homogenous set is the binary nature of that set. A binary numerical system has only two numbers – 0 and 1– and there are no other options. Within a bounded set there are only two options; things are either in or out; a or b; black or white – there are no grey areas. Greggs (2009) identifies this as a characteristic of some forms of contemporary evangelicalism:

> While evangelicalism has been happy to assimilate itself to certain cultural phenomena, especially around economic market forces, its desire to be "in the world but not of the world" determines that many evangelical impulses arise from a form of separationism which relies on straightforward binary descriptors of insider-outsider, saved-damned, elect-reject. Strong particularism gives rise to strong separationism, and underpinning this separationism is often a degree of eschatological self-certainty which seeks such utter self-assurance as to push to the outside anyone who seems vaguely other or an outsider to the central issues perceived to be definitive for inclusion in the Kingdom of God (Greggs, 2009, 153).

The binary nature of the ecclesiology of King's Church became clear throughout my fieldwork and this is a characteristic of sects in the Wallis typology.

4.5: Bounded Ecclesiology

Restorationist churches see themselves as the focal point of God's final chapter in the history of his people which places a great deal of importance on the church; hence, a tightly bounded church model emerges. Within this tightly bounded model an essential characteristic involves defining who is inside the bounded set and who is outside of it. The boundary defines the

church. Christians can be part of this bounded set, but only those who conform to the essential characteristics of this bounded set. A Christian within the context of a bounded set is defined sharply. This definition comes through a test of orthodoxy, which often includes a verbal affirmation of belief in a specific set of doctrines, meaning that there is a 'sharp line between Christians and non-Christians' (Hiebert, 1994, 115). This sharp boundary line means that once people are Christians within a bounded set, they become a theologically homogenous unit.

Indicative of Christian identity in King's Church is the eight-week course that a person must attend to become a member. A person wishing to become a member must complete a course based on Wallis' *Living God's Way* (1984). Once they have completed this, and agree to the King's Church statement of faith, they can become a member. They are then welcomed into the church at the start of a Sunday morning service. During my fieldwork there was one such event involving sixteen people:

> The service started with the welcoming and induction of some people as new members of the church. There were some who had moved from other churches, some who had been 'born again' and some were new to the city (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 5).

It was interesting to note that there were people who had moved from other churches, people who were new to the city and people who had been 'born again'. 'Born again' was used in two ways, firstly to identify a recent conversion experience and secondly as one of the essential characteristics of a person within this bounded set. All those who are part of the bounded set at some point in their personal history have been 'born again', whereas the people highlighted in the service had recently experienced a conversion to Christianity. Those who had moved from other churches were celebrated along with those who had been 'born again', once again highlighting the restorationist belief that they are the true church and the one that will usher

in the *eschaton.* The sermons at King's Church often emphasise the sharp line between those who are inside and those who are outside of the boundary:

> Elder 1 spoke in very dualistic terms – everything with either the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Darkness (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 5).

> Elder 2 said: There are two kinds of people in this world: those who live by natural sight and those who live by faith (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 3).

The importance of boundaries means that a bounded set has a particular approach to other churches and church membership, with Hiebert saying:

> Other churches will be viewed as "sects" and questions would be asked regarding whether they are really church... Only church members are able to fully participate in the life of the church and conversion is the only way by which people can enter into the life of the church (Hiebert, 1994, 116-117).

The exclusive boundary lines of the church are clearly drawn. Once again, this became clear in my fieldwork at King's Church, where my diary notes:

> Elder 1 started to put in some boundaries that he asked me to abide by. The main boundary was that I could not be a "public face" of the church at any point unless I was willing to commit to their core beliefs and values. For reasons of personal integrity I cannot do this; for example, I am an Anglican and King's Church does not recognise denominations. Therefore, Elder 1 said that I was welcome to attend but if I have questions, doubts and uncertainties about anything that happens I should not share them with congregation members but simply keep my counsel.
>
> His concern was that if I shared them this could be to the "detriment of the church family." He used as an example adult baptism. King's Church believes in adult baptism by full immersion and not in infant baptism. If I disagreed with this it would be better for the "church family" if I did not share my unease within the church community but kept quiet about it (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Initial Meeting).

In this brief encounter the boundaries between insider and outsider are defined – indicative of a bounded set (Hiebert, 1994, 112). There are the boundaries of doctrine, membership and denomination.[10] In this encounter, the researcher is clearly outside of the boundary, and so is not a member of the bounded set. The boundary lines are defined by a powerful duo: the elders and their interpretation of the Bible. The elders' authority is central, as it is the way in which the church is structured and its boundaries maintained. Elder 2 preached on this subject one Sunday morning, saying, 'You cannot submit to the authority of Christ and not the authority of the church. You must serve the vision given by the elders. Imitate me as I imitate Christ' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 3). The elders' authority is given to them by their apostle, Keri Jones, who also sets the doctrine for the church. My fieldwork diary notes state:

> I spoke with a few people as we walked, including the elder. One interesting comment that he said was, "Keri Jones writes our doctrine." I asked about training for ministry and he replied, "all the elders had been away for one year to a Bible school in Cardiff; this was not a prerequisite but it just so happens that all the elders had been there at this time" (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Mission Week - Day 1).

The apostle holds great authority in this context, setting both the doctrine and appointing elders. The particular interpretation of the Bible upholds the authority of both the elders and the apostle, meaning effectively that any criticism can be silenced by an appeal to either the elders or the Bible. The apostle's interpretation of the Bible is also used to define the boundaries of who belongs and who does not belong. Ultimate authority belongs to the apostle. Theoria and boundedness can be seen fusing together. The boundary is upheld by an appeal to theoria, which in turn defines the boundary. It is

[10] King's Church and the Restorationist movement do not recognise themselves as a denomination but rather as a family of churches. However, the way that they operate and organise themselves is indistinguishable for a denomination, in that there is a common tradition, leader and identity within the family of churches that are part of 'Ministries without Borders'.

clear that these two aspects give definition to their ecclesiology and these two aspects are central to their mission practices.

4.6: Bounded Pneumatology

As I have previously highlighted the vision of a restored kingdom draws extensively from the Pentecostal movement. One dominant characteristic of the Pentecostal movement is the emphasis on supernatural signs and wonders. Speaking in tongues, healing ceremonies and words of knowledge are common practices in Pentecostalism, and during my fieldwork some of these practices were commonplace. Supernatural signs and wonders are interpreted as signs of the end time, and so exhibiting them can be classed as a boundary marker. Furthermore, if a person exhibits them they are inside, but if they do not then they are outside.

Manifestations of the Spirit are exhibited each week in praise; tongues are spoken, prophetic words given and healings sought as part of the weekly practice of this church. In my first meeting (Fieldwork Diary, Initial Meeting) Elder 1 highlighted Acts 2: 37-47 as the biblical mandate for the church, explaining that this piece of text speaks of healings and a tangible outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Elder 1 stated that King's Church believed that this was possible today and that through this the church would grow. The elders believed that they would see God healing people and ultimately raising people from the dead through the ministry of King's Church. The interpretation of the Spirit, in this context, becomes a boundary marker, which became clear at the first service I attended. During this service we were encouraged to praise God with tongues, by shouting and by dancing in the Spirit, and if we did not do this we were 'holding blessings back from the church' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 1).

King's Church's interpretation of the Holy Spirit as boundary-defining means that when the congregation gathers there is a strong focus on the Spirit and

manifestations thereof. When the Spirit-filled congregation worship, they become an evangelistic entity, where all who enter encounter them in worship also encounter God. Virgo highlights this point as follows:

> The house of God should also be the gate to Heaven. God wants his house rebuilt that he might take pleasure in it and appear in his glory. It is, therefore, to be a place of encounter with God where the unbeliever coming in will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you... The Holy Spirit wants to lead us into greater heights and depths of praise (Virgo, 1985, 64-65).

The evangelistic importance of worship and the boundary-marking role of manifestations of the Spirit mean that charismatic worship is a central element within restorationist churches. A Sunday morning service in King's Church has two central elements, namely worship and preaching, with everything else subordinate. This subordination can be identified by the time allotted to the worship and preaching and also the frequency with which they appear in a service. For example, the sharing of bread and wine happens once a month, and church notices, whilst weekly, only last a few minutes. Conversely, each week the preaching and the worship elements receive the greatest length of time (30-40 minutes each), thus highlighting their priority in the life of King's Church. Worship, which is influenced strongly by Pentecostalism, consists of the congregation singing choruses, and dispersed throughout this there will be prophecies or a 'tongue' that will then be interpreted.[11] On one level this is similar to many non-conformist churches, but it is the ecstatic experiential nature of the worship that marks the service out as different. Worship will build to an ecstatic pinnacle moment where the worshipper will claim to be experiencing the Spirit. I note in my field diary:

> The worship continued and another person went to the microphone and spoke in tongues and then gave an interpretation for that tongue. The worship got louder and livelier and moved to a point of ecstasy, seeming to be about

[11] The interpretation of a tongue is a way in which church order is kept. It is based on the King's Church Eldership's interpretation of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14.

> transcending the present world and connecting with God (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 1).

Roberts (1999, 18) distinguishes between charismatic worship and alternative worship by linking these particular expressions of worship to wider cultural shifts:

> If the modernist mindset tends towards a sharp distinction between the world of physics and the world of God, the postmodern mindset brings the world of the Spirit back into the world of physical things. This also explains a key distinction between most charismatic and alternative worship. In charismatic worship, God is located "outside" the physical domain, so to experience God means to experience him outside or beyond the physical domain. By contrast, alternative worship relocates God back within the physical domain, so to experience God means to encounter him in and through the created things around – symbolically, iconically, sacramentally (Roberts, 1999, 18).

Roberts is claiming that a charismatic experience seeks to transcend the boundaries of the physical realm because God is located beyond this physical realm. Whilst there is some accuracy within this claim, I would also suggest that there are further reasons for this ecstatic approach to worship – it is also an eschatological sign of what is to come. Those who experience the ecstatic encounter are identifiable as being inside of the bounded set, which is an otherworldly eschatological boundary, with those experiencing the Spirit being inside of the boundary and those who are not outside of it. Yet, whilst this boundary is otherworldly, it is controlled locally in the bounded set. Within King's Church a person can give a word of prophecy or tongue on the stage – a very public act which locates them firmly inside of the bounded set – however, before going on to the stage the person must first seek permission from an elder. Ultimately, the elder controls the boundary.

The aforementioned experience of ecstasy can be interpreted sociologically, while insights are given into why ecstatic or supernatural encounters within

worship are significant in view of mission. In *Life in Fragments* Bauman identifies a search for 'peak experiences':

> I propose that the postmodern cultural pressures, while intensifying the search for "peak experiences," have at the same time uncoupled it from religion-prone interests and concerns, privatized it, and cast mainly non-religious institution in the role of purveyors of relevant services. The "whole experience" of revelation, ecstasy, breaking the boundaries of self and total transcendence, once the privilege of the selected "aristocracy of culture" – saints, hermits, mystics, ascetic monks, tsadiks or dervishes – and coming either as an unsolicited miracle, in no obvious fashion related to what the receiver of grace has done to earn it, or as an act of grace rewarding the life of self-immolation and denial, has been put by postmodern culture in every individuals reach, recast as a realistic target and plausible project for each individual's self-training and relocated at the product of life devoted to the art of consumer self-indulgence (Bauman, 1995, 115).

It is this search for 'peak experiences' that draws people into worship. In this peak experience at King's Church, many, it is claimed, encounter the Spirit of God – and this is transformative for them. However, this search for an ecstatic worship experience is not a new phenomenon and was criticised by Kirk (1931) in his insistence that:

> The systematic quest of ecstasy, or of any form of "experience", merely for the gratification which will be derived there from, is irreligious. Such a quest... turns the seeker's mind back upon himself [sic] and his own state of consciousness and so induces once again just the self-centredness which it is the whole purpose of religion to annihilate (Kirk, 1931, 198).

Although Kirk is speaking about a different context, his critique is still pertinent because whilst many of the people within King's Church are not simply seeking a 'peak experience', there is the danger that this form of evangelistic practice will attract a transient group of thrill seekers.

The pneumatology of this bounded set is focused on drawing people into the set. Manifestations of the Spirit and ecstatic encounters with the Spirit become a way in which people are drawn into the bounded set. Charismatic worship is an opportunity to encounter the power of God through the Spirit, so members are encouraged to bring non-Christians along to Sunday morning services because it is believed that through this experience they will be 'born-again' and join the church. This was particularly apparent in my first visit to a Sunday morning service, where after an ecstatic time of charismatic worship my fieldwork diary notes: 'There was an altar call inviting people forward to receive Jesus for the first time'. Whilst people were responding to Jesus, it was the ecstatic experience of the Spirit that drew them into making a response. This pneumatologically-focused evangelistic practice draws strongly from *Power Evangelism* (1985):

> By power evangelism I mean a presentation of the Gospel that is rational but also transcends the rational (though it is in no way "irrational" or anti-rational). The explanation of the Gospel – the clear proclamation of the finished work of Christ on the cross – comes with a demonstration of God's power through signs and wonders. Power evangelism is a spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, empowered presentation of the Gospel. Power evangelism is preceded and undergirded by demonstrations of God's presence, and frequently results in groups of people being saved (Wimber, 1985, 78).

Percy (1996) claims that, 'the Spirit for Wimber is clearly a form of "transformative power": it changes that which is alien to God, conforming it to his plan or likeness' (1996, 89). Percy places Wimber's *Power Evangelism* in the wider context of church growth and the local context of a church community, and it is here where we see the greatest parallels with King's Church:

> Wimber regards the experience of the Vineyard community at praise and celebration as a sign in its own right… the evangelistic task of the Church is to allow people to experience the power of God, and respond accordingly. Evangelism is more than just preaching or teaching: it is the sharing of

> experience, in the hope that others may also share this, and join the Church (Percy, 1996, 107).

However, charismatic worship is not contained solely in church-building, and worship in a public place is common in restorationist churches and a common theme in restorationist writings. Virgo (1985, 67) shares an event experienced on Brighton Seafront on a Whit Sunday, where he noted that over four hundred people were praising God by singing, which in turn caused many other people to listen and to take evangelistic tracts. During my fieldwork at King's Church there was an example of a public praise event in Manchester city centre that I attended, noting that:

> The crowd was very buoyant and confident in praising God in this very public setting. Often their eyes would be closed, their arms raised and they would be calling out: "Praise God" and "Halleluiah." There was the feeling that in the praise and in the spoken word the city was being claimed for Jesus (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Mission Week, Final Day - King's Praise).

One of the aims of the outdoor praise event, as already suggested, is to enable an encounter with the transforming presence of the Spirit. A further goal of these outdoor praise events is drawn from the aims of the *March for Jesus*, which was a gathering in 1987 where 12,000 people walked around the city of London. It was organised by a number of charismatic churches and organisations, such as the *Pioneer* and *Ichthus* church-planting initiatives: 'The aim was to mobilise Christians to proclaim the name of Jesus in London and pronounce defeat of the Spiritual forces entrenched in the capital and the heart of the nation' (Kendrick et al., 1992, 25). The walk happened again the following year and attracted 55,000 people.

The evangelistic method of *March for Jesus* is remarkably similar to that of King's Church. In my fieldwork diary I noted that there seemed to be two aims of the praise event in Manchester city centre, the first being to 'claim Manchester for Jesus' and the second being to tell passers-by of their need

for Jesus in their lives. The first aim, to 'claim Manchester for Jesus', is similar to March for Jesus's aims to 'proclaim the name of Jesus' – the aim being to raise the presence of Jesus in the city, and through that influence the spiritual realm in a form of 'spiritual warfare'. In their opinion, this missiologically determines that people will be more receptive to hearing the message of Jesus. There is some similarity between the ecstatic approach to worship and the 'claiming of Manchester', in that both approaches see the world as a negative place. An ecstatic approach to worship offers the participant temporary respite from this world, and the 'claiming for Jesus' starts with a negative approach towards the world, hence it needs claiming back. This reveals a binary missiology that is shaped by a dualistic approach to the world. The Spirit is the agent that enables a person to move from a position of no faith to being born again, moving them from the outside of the bounded set to the inside. Spirit-filled worship enables this to happen and spiritual warfare clearly removes any obstacles that might stop this from happening.

4.7: Bounded Eschatology

I have previously noted the symbiotic relationship between ecclesiology and eschatology: the church ushers in the *eschaton*, and to bring about the *eschaton* believers must be part of the church – the two are linked intrinsically to one another. The focus on the church as a bounded set ushering in the *eschaton* elevates the importance of the church to an eschatological agent, and charismatic worship within this environment becomes an eschatological sign that a person is part of the bounded set. The church as a bounded set then becomes a place that seeks perfection where the future eschatological Kingdom of God is modelled. As evidenced by King's Church, 'The church is the fellowship of those who have experienced God's reign and entered into the enjoyment, privileges and responsibilities of its blessings' (King's Church, 2009a). By elevating the importance of the church, and narrowly the importance of the restorationist church, everything else is demoted. The restorationist church is the eschatological agent, so anything

that is not a part thereof is slowing down the impending *eschaton*. This approach moves the restorationist church into binary terms: people are either 'of this world' or 'not of this world', either 'good' or 'evil', either part of the eschatological agent or slowing down the eschatological event:

> One of its main tasks is to display in this present evil age the life and fellowship of the "age to come." The church has a dual character: it is the people of the "age to come," but it still lives in this age, being constituted of mortal men and women. This means that while in this age the church will never attain perfection, it must nevertheless display the life and perfect order of the end time Kingdom of God (King's Church, 2009a).

This world-denying ideology can be seen in the sermons and literature of King's Church, Manchester:

> "God is leading us into the Promised Land" (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 2).

> The sermon had a number of themes running through it, the first being that we can be people who bring God's blessing to a dark place (the world being that dark place). We were told that: "In a dark place there is a man who brings God's blessing" and that "We too can live in Elijah's world" (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 6).

However, this world-denying ideology is selective in the sense that there are many aspects of Western culture that restorationism does not deny. The world-denying ideology appears to be based on conservative morals rather than on a particular ethical stance, which can be discerned from the following quote, which links homosexuality with debauchery, from my fieldwork diary:

> Yet when I look at this city that is under the influence of the enemy, I know it is not right. There are hundreds of thousands steeped in sin, Satan has deceived them, loads suffering, the poor, the homeless, demon oppression. Our city promotes promiscuity, homosexuality and all forms of debauchery. These are not the will of God (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 4).

Restorationism denies the modern liberal world, as it is liberal social values that go against their theological conservatism. The reason for this world-denying ideology is eschatological and it is central to defining the bounded set. The church is the vehicle that brings about the *eschaton*, so it must be distinct from that which surrounds it and be bounded, otherwise it will fail in its eschatological vocation. King's Church finds its distinctiveness in opposition to the surrounding liberal culture through a binary mantra that offers an escape from a city that is 'steeped in sin' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 4).

4.8: Bounded Mission Practices

Bounded ecclesiology, pneumatology and eschatology have a significant influence on the mission practices of King's Church. Hiebert identifies four characteristics of evangelism in bounded sets: 'First, we would seek to win the lost for Christ, but we would be careful not to baptize them until they affirm our creeds and follow our practices' (Hiebert, 1994, 117). King's Church seeks to 'win the lost for Christ', which is clear in all their publicity materials and was one of the dominant themes of their services during my fieldwork. For Hiebert, baptism is a rite of passage, yet King's Church does not view it as the rite of passage into church membership but as an essential characteristic of the bounded set. Baptism is an essential characteristic of membership within King's Church, but the criterion for baptism is low, whereas the criterion for church membership is high. The rite of passage into membership of King's Church includes the eight-week course and the service of induction and welcome. It is during the eight-week course that a person will affirm the creeds and agree to follow the practices of the church community, which happens when they conform to the essential characteristics of the bounded set. This practice can be contrasted with baptism, in which it can take place spontaneously within a service and without any prior notice (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 7). From this experience it can be ascertained that

membership of this bounded set is defined by membership of the church rather than by baptism. This leads me to the conclusion that the criterion for membership is stricter than the criteria for baptism.

Hiebert's second characteristic of evangelism within a bounded set is that 'we would tend to view everything in Christianity as true, and everything in other religions as pagan and false' (Hiebert, 1994, 117). This is defined more narrowly in King's Church, in that it is quite clear that King's Church and the restorationist movement do not view everything within Christianity as true; rather, they view everything within their tradition as true and other elements of Christianity, at best, as misinformed. Walker, when writing about restorationists' views on church history, says:

> Throughout this Restorationalist view of Church history, a consistent theme is the apostasy of the historic denominations and the failure to adhere to New Testament principles... Protestantism is indicted for failing to return to a unified Church. Protestant denominations are viewed as churches perpetuating their own distinctiveness and failing to repent of their sin of divisiveness (Walker, 1998, 144).

This point was also exemplified in week three of my field work, when Elder 3 stated that he has a 'holy hatred for counterfeit representations of Christ – people who call themselves Christians but are not filled with the Spirit' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 7).

This is brought into further focus in Hiebert's third point: 'We would define Christianity primarily in terms of our own beliefs and practices...' (Hiebert, 1994, 117). This change in focus places the bounded set's definition of Christianity at the centre and removes external critical points of reference. This gives the set the authority to both include and exclude, as they have the ability to define the boundaries. This corresponds with the sense of self-importance that the restorationist movement places upon itself and the lack of credence given to external critical voices.

Hiebert's final characteristic of evangelism in a bounded set is based on the training of leaders within a new church. He states about bounded sets: 'Because our theological position would be definite, we would have to train native leaders who can maintain this position unchanged' (Hiebert, 1994, 118). The training of leaders within King's Church involves identifying and training potential leaders at the 'Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word'.

4.9: Conclusions

This chapter has identified that the symbiotic relationship between ecclesiology, pneumatology and eschatology creates binary mission practices within King's Church. The goal of these mission practices is to draw people across the boundary of the bounded set, with the bounded set operating in a similar way to the sect in the Wallis typology.

My fieldwork identified that all of the evangelistic activities focused on encouraging people to cross the boundary into King's Church, with none of the activities being focused on the wider mission of God in the world. In addition, the mission practice was all ecclesiologically-centred. An example of this is V.I.P. night that King's Church runs for the homeless community of Manchester (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, V.I.P Night), which serves a very practical need in feeding homeless people, but the clear goal of the evening is to convert and increase membership of the church. This highlights that the goal of the mission practices within King's Church is church membership and a clear prioritisation of theoria over praxis. This is indicative of the mission practices of King's Church.

The bounded set that Hiebert identifies appears to be central to the ecclesiology of King's Church. The boundaries are tightly defined and a person is either in or out. The boundary creates a homogenous theological unit whereby elders are firmly in control of the interpretation of the Bible and the

doctrine of the church, which in turn creates an extremely well-defined boundary and strong boundary markers. Here we see the prioritisation of theoria defining the boundary.

Mission practices submit to a fundamentalist ecclesiology whereby the Spirit revives the church, which itself ushers in the *eschaton.* The exclusive nature of restorationist ecclesiology means that any person that is outside of the church boundary is a hindrance to the impending *eschaton*, and therefore the goal of all mission practices is to draw people into the end time church.

These mission practices and this ideology are radically different to those of my second congregation, Sanctus1, to which I now turn my attention.

Chapter 5: Sanctus1

Chapter 5 draws some conclusions on the mission practices of the second congregation in this research – Sanctus1. As was the practice with King's Church, this chapter identifies key strands in Sanctus1's mission practice through a historical overview and ethnographic research. The historical overview looks at the development of two particular and relatively new movements – the emerging church and Fresh Expressions of Church – with which Sanctus1 is associated. However, these two movements have not been without criticism, so the early part of this chapter examines some of these critiques.

The latter half of the chapter examines the mission practices of Sanctus1, whose approach to context is identified as the revised correlation method of contextual theology. Within this broader framework the principles of obliquity, dialogical spaces and significantly, and in contrast to King's Church, centred set theory are the three defining factors in the mission practices of Sanctus1. These mission practices are developed within this chapter and it becomes clear that they all express the desire for inclusion and to welcome. In contrast to King's Church, a suspicion of boundaries is identified within Sanctus1 and appears to be problematic in their identity. Alongside this, the chapter begins to explore the relationship between theoria, praxis and poiesis within the mission practices of Sanctus1; this is then fully developed in the concluding chapter.

5.1: The Emerging Church

> Sanctus1 is an emerging church in the city centre of Manchester engaged in a journey of creative exploration into faith, worship and culture (Sanctus1, 2007a).

Sanctus1 has been established since 2001 and is associated with the emerging church movement and the Anglican/Methodist Fresh Expressions

initiative. In 2004, the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England published the *Mission-Shaped Church* report, which coined a term to describe some of the new forms of emerging church: 'Fresh Expressions of Church' (Archbishops' Council, 2004, 43).

> A Fresh Expression is a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the Gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context (Croft, 2006, 9).

'Fresh expressions' is a national initiative established in 2005 by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Methodist Council. The initiative encourages a variety of expressions of church, such as 'café church', 'messy church', 'alternative worship', 'base-ecclesial communities' and 'emerging church'. Whilst some use the terms 'Fresh Expressions' and 'emerging church' interchangeably, I suggest that there is a distinction between the two. The first distinction is that the emerging church is a more fluid, less tangible entity, and it is ecclesiologically broader than the Anglican and Methodist denominations and spans the Western world. Furthermore, it is a movement of people re-imaging the church, and whilst some emerging churches relate to the Fresh Expressions initiative, many more have no formal institutional relationship. In 2005, Gibbs and Bolger offered a further definition based on detailed interviews and visits to a number of emerging churches in the UK and USA. From that research they produced the following definition:

> Emerging churches are communities of people that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses the nine practices. Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate and produce, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 45).

Whilst Gibbs and Bolger are not practitioners, they are supportive of the movement and their research is written to affirm rather than to critique – exemplified by the fact that their definition is highly positive and presents a somewhat idealised view of the emerging church. Their methodology involved interviewing emerging church leaders and then distilling their interview findings into a number of key characteristics. It should be noted that this is a self-defining process – emerging church leaders defining their understandings of their communities – within this process there will certainly be bias towards some areas. One should note that there is no methodological neutrality within this process and that it facilitates the self-promotion of the emerging church.

Much of the current writing about the emerging church is either highly affirmative or highly critical. This can, in part, be attributed to the infancy of the movement and the fact that there is no long-term view. The greatest critique has come from theologically conservative scholars and pastors in the United States. One prominent critique is Driscoll, who states:

> In the mid-1990s I was part of what is now known as the Emerging Church and spent some time travelling the country to speak on the emerging church in the emerging culture on a team put together by Leadership Network called the Young Leader Network. But, I eventually had to distance myself from the Emergent stream of the network because friends like Brian McLaren and Doug Pagitt began pushing a theological agenda that greatly troubled me. Examples include referring to God as a chick, questioning God's sovereignty over and knowledge of the future, denial of the substitutionary atonement at the cross, a low view of Scripture, and denial of Hell, which is one hell of a mistake (Missouri Baptist Laymen's Association, 2009a).

This critique is particularly pointed at the emerging church (known as Emergent Village) in the United States. Carson develops these critiques further by characterising the emerging church movement through protest:

> The emerging church movement is characterised by a fair bit of protest against traditional evangelicalism and, more broadly, against all that it understands by modernism. But some of its proponents add another front of protest – namely, the sensitive seeker church, the mega-church. Sometimes these three elements are hard to disentangle (Carson, 2005, 36).

Whilst Carson's criticisms need to be recognised, the ecclesiological context of the emerging church in the United Kingdom is very different to that of the United States. Carson's criticism is centred on the writings of Kimball (2003), McLaren (2006) and Burke (2003), who are influential figures in the emerging church in the US, whereas in the UK their influence in marginal. The only British figure critiqued is Chalke (Carson, 2005, 182-187) and in particular his questioning of the atonement doctrine of penal substitution (Chalke and Mann, 2003). In my opinion, as a practitioner and leader of an emerging church in Britain, Chalke is not a leading figure in the emerging church in this country.

It appears that there is an ideological battle happening in the United States centred on penal substitution and the place of the Bible within the emerging church. Many of these conversations were happening in the United Kingdom in the early and mid-nineties with the publication of *the Post-Evangelical* (Tomlinson, 1995), but I believe that the criticisms in the United States do not resonate with the emerging church in the United Kingdom. However, there are many criticisms of Fresh Expressions which are pertinent to the British context.

Percy offers a strong critique of Fresh Expressions in *Evaluating Fresh Expressions* (Nelstrop and Percy, 2008). His central critique is that it is a form of collusion with the contemporary cultural obsession with newness, alternative and novelty rather than a prioritisation of missiology or ecclesiology. Percy claims that Fresh Expressions is an example of this obsession with newness, whereby religion and faith have become consumable commodities that constantly need updating. Furthermore, he claims that

Fresh Expressions has become populated by demand-led groups, often consisting of people who have opted out of traditional church and opted into a Fresh Expression. The consequence is that Fresh Expressions serve people's desire to find more meaning and purpose, yet there is little sense of sacrifice and obligation within them. Percy moves on to identify a number of dangers of this approach to the church, one of these being that if the church is an expression of post-associationalism then the lack of a 'thick connection between the Fresh Expressions and local commitment may diminish social capital' (Nelstrop and Percy, 2008, 32). This lack of a 'thick connection' and sustained commitment to the local means that Fresh Expressions threaten the relationship between religious capital and social capital, and in the long term have a negative effect on the mission of the church catholic.

Percy's claim resonates with Bauman's definition of a 'cloakroom community' (Bauman, 2000, 201). Cloakroom or carnival communities offer temporary respite from the struggles of everyday life as individuals withdraw into this temporary group. The theatre, a football match or a mega-church provide this temporary community, where a similar interest brings a disparate group of people together. Bauman identifies a number of problems with such communities, claiming that they do not create social cohesions but actually break it. Moreover, they scatter rather than condense the untapped energy of social impulses, and so they contribute to and perpetuate the solitude so often felt in contemporary society. Cloakroom communities are a symptom of the social disorder specific to contemporary society, and essentially Percy is claiming that Fresh Expressions of church fit into this picture.

Percy's claim is that the Fresh Expressions of church have colluded with consumerism and given rise to pluralism and individualism whilst cloaked in the rhetoric of new ways of being a church. This collusion means that the 'community of memory' is at risk:

> The church brings into its purview past, present and future. In so doing, it functions as a community of memory and hope.
>
> The church is a community of memory. It has a history, which in an important sense constitutes it. The church community keeps its past alive by retelling its story (Grentz, 2000, 499).

If the community of memory is replaced by a group of loosely associated individuals' empathetic sharing, then faith becomes the 'property of a sect that sees itself as engaged with but apart from society' (Percy, 2008, 33) and as such is no longer associated with a public community of memory and becomes privatised. This criticism resonates with a comment made by Tilby in a similar vein:

> I am worried that Fresh Expressions practitioners read too well and too uncritically the concern for comfort, gratification and instant comprehension that our culture endorses. Have we just become too good at identifying people's needs and producing a version of the Gospel that apparently meets the need, but fails to transform it? (Tilby, 2008, 87).

Tilby suggests that previous ecclesiological movements concerned with the renewal of the church began with a 'fierce rejection of the world and its dominant culture. There was no appeal to incarnational theology to justify an accommodation with a centre judged to be sinful' (Tilby, 2008, 86). She moves on to claim that missionary-minded Christians have become so good at reading culture and responding to it that they are indistinguishable from it. Hence, they create a church that exists for itself rather than for the transformation of the world of which it is part. Tilby's response to this is to place the liturgy and sacramental life back at the centre of the church. Both of these, she claims, 'form Christians and inform their engagements and disengagements with culture' (Tilby, 2008, 88). Tilby's argument places the liturgy and sacraments as the ways in which memory and identity are carried from generation to generation. The argument assumes that there is no liturgical or sacramental life within Fresh Expressions, a concern that has

been addressed nationally by the Fresh Expressions team with the publication of *Ancient Faith – Future Mission* (Croft and Mobsby, 2009). Fresh expressions of church, such as *Transcendence, Moot, Contemplative Fire* and *Maybe*, all offer alternatives to this critique, placing the liturgy and sacraments firmly at the centre of their community life. Tilby's criticism is directed at a particular sub-group within Fresh Expressions, and whilst this criticism may be fair, it perhaps says more about her Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology than offering a balanced view of the entire Fresh Expressions movement. In my opinion Tilby's critique is based more on caricature than thorough research into the subject.

Finally, Percy expresses major concern the that Fresh Expressions movement is unsure of its sense of direction:

> The Fresh Expressions movement is somewhat Janus-like in its missiological outlook. Is this movement the new highway to mission, or rather a series of intricate cul-de-sacs? For example, what is a Fresh Expression doing when it designates its leader "Abbot," and key or core members as "Guardians?" Can it really be much more than hubris that such a dense and traditional concept as "Abbot" is appropriated for what is still a new, thin and rather untested group? The danger is that we are all too easily immersed in a semi-detached and sacred meaning-making enclave within consumerist culture. Left to its own devices the Fresh Expressions movement may actually be deeply collusive with consumerism, offering alternatives and affirmatives simultaneously (but note, not critiques) (Percy, 2008, 35).

Percy's criticisms are pointed, yet it seems he is contrasting Fresh Expressions with an idealised picture of an established parish church. Whilst it may be true that some Fresh Expressions create a consumerist approach to faith, this can also be true of many parish churches. It can also be true that many parish churches do not contribute to social capital in the way that Percy is claiming. The reality of church-going in a mobile twenty-first century urban context is that many people exercise choice when selecting their church by considering factors such as worship style, Sunday school provision, theology

and denomination. Percy presents Fresh Expressions as the embodiment of consumerist spirituality, when the reality is that the diversification of the UK church landscape means that almost every church, whether they like it or not, is in a market context. The only place where this is different is a village where there is only one church and many local people are unable to drive. In this context, for these people there is no choice; however, the majority of people exercise choice when selecting a church.

Percy's arguments are strong; nonetheless, contrasting an unrealistic, purist ecclesial body with a damning cynical caricature-based critique of Fresh Expressions does not do justice to the complexity of the church landscape. For example, Percy condemns the use of the terms 'Abbot' and 'Guardians', whereas those who use these terms use them to emphasise their deep commitment to one another – the antithesis to consumerism. Whilst the language may be misplaced, the desire that it represents should not be seen as collusion with consumerism.

The strongest and most aggressive critique of Fresh Expressions came in *For the Parish* (Davison and Milbank, 2010). This polemical and aggressive book sets the tone in the first line: 'Mission-Shaped Church is a flawed document' (Davison and Milbank, 2010, 1) and this tone continues throughout. The main criticisms that the book offers of the Fresh Expressions movement are: *Mission-Shaped Church* has a faulty methodology; Fresh Expressions treats culture as inherently neutral and represents a flight away from tradition towards segregation. Cray (Fresh Expressions, 2011a) and others respond to the criticism by noting the methodological flaws in *For The Parish*. He notes that the authors have not read all the Fresh Expressions material and much of their philosophical and theological criticism is based on *Mission-Shaped Church* (Archbishops' Council, 2004), a document that is not a book of theology or philosophy. They also have not visited a Fresh Expressions of Church and it is claimed that their criticism is once again based more on caricature rather than reality (Fresh Expressions, 2011a).

Cray concedes some ground on the second criticism, acknowledging that rigorous debate is needed around the relationship that Fresh Expressions has with culture. This debate is wider than just Fresh Expressions of Church, and central to it is the relationship that the church has with culture – an area that I explore in specific reference to Sanctus1 (section 5.3). *For The Parish* fails to recognise that the majority of Fresh Expressions are part of the mission and ministry of a parish church. Again, the authors seek to create a false dichotomy between parishes and Fresh Expressions which is unhelpful but at least serves to highlight the motivation of the authors.

New ecclesiological movements such as Fresh Expressions and the emerging church need critical evaluation because there can be a degree of hubris (Percy, 2008, 35) with new church movements, and this is true of Fresh Expressions and the emerging church. Therefore, it is vital to remain critical when engaging with material that can be perceived as self-promoting and self-referential. With that proviso in mind, this chapter looks at the history and development of the emerging church movement over the past twenty-five years, before then focusing on the particular narrative of Sanctus1. The chapter will then evaluate the three core practices of Gibbs and Bolger (2000, 45) and correlate these with Sanctus1. Finally, the chapter identifies and evaluates three mission practices of Sanctus1.

The second principle identified that informs my research method is the practice of reflexivity. As previously mentioned (page 62) reflexivity is a corrective to previous modes of ethnographic research as the ethnographer reflects on their own personal preferences as they seek to transparent.

> The practice of reflexivity…challenges established understandings of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' in the research process. It eschews an 'objective' stance that renders the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible while simultaneously throwing the spotlight on the beliefs and practices of the object of research (Slee, 2004, 51).

In section 3.2, I identified Sanctus1 as the church that I established in 2002 and led until 2009. It is therefore a church that I have a personal preference towards. This raises questions about my neutrality with regard to this particular piece of fieldwork. However, this is a tension that I am acknowledging to enable me to reflect on my own preferences as I seek to practice reflexivity. The relationship between research and neutrality is a complex one and, whilst I recognise that total neutrality in ethnographic research is not possible, I can ensure that for the academic credibility of this particular piece of research boundaries have been defined and ground rules set (see section 3.3).

My close association with Sanctus1 means that this situation is atypical. For example, during this period of research I still had pastoral oversight for the people who were part of Sanctus1. I am also conscious of my own personal bias towards this community due to my close association with it. This has been recognised and reflected upon, however, I no longer work with Sanctus1 and this has enabled a critical distance to form. There were also considerable benefits of being closely associated with Sanctus1. I understood its subtle nuances and personally knew and had unprecedented access to the key people who served the church. These benefits and unconscious personal biases have been factored into my research methodology and now we move forward to examine the history of the emerging church movement and Sanctus1.

5.2: The First Emerging Church

It is widely recognised that the emerging church movement (in its current form in the United Kingdom) began with the development of alternative worship at The Nine O'clock Service (NOS) in Sheffield in 1985.[12] Since that time the term 'alternative worship', whilst disliked by many of its practitioners,

[12] See: Baker and Gay (2003) *Alternative Worship*. Gibbs and Bolger (2005) *Emerging Churches*. Roberts (1999) *Alternative Worship in the Anglican Church*.

has remained and is used to describe a range of experimental forms of worship inspired by the NOS (Baker and Gay, 2003, vii).

The Nine O'clock Service began in 1985 when John Wimber led a series of renewal and healing meetings in Sheffield at the invitation of St. Thomas Crooke's Anglican Church. At these meetings were a group of young people known as the Nairn Street Community – a group of people who lived in a community house sharing a common purse and a sense of mission. During the renewal and healing meetings the Nairn Street Community experienced an 'anointing by the Holy Spirit' (Howard, 1996, 12), and at the end of 1985 they were invited to begin an experimental service on Sunday evening at 21:00. The aim of this service was to reach out to those that the church was not currently engaging with, namely 18 to 30-year-olds. Initially, The Nine O'clock Service combined the feel and culture of a nightclub with charismatic theology learnt from Wimber. The wider cultural context was that this was the period leading towards the 'Second Summer of Love', a time between 1988 and 1989 when ecstasy-induced illegal rave parties took place in the United Kingdom. Typically, the rave organisers would arrive at an empty warehouse or a field armed with a generator, turntables, amplification and a lighting system, and then they would then begin to play rave music. Ravers, organised through word of mouth, would then descend on the location for the rave driven by the hypnotic sounds of Acid House music and the newly arrived dance drug, ecstasy. It was within the cultural context of Acid House music and dance clubs that The Nine O'clock Service created a contextual form of worship:

> By the end of 1986, NOS numbered over 150 people. The growth came from both the un-churched and evangelicals disillusioned with the form of the institutional church… Over time NOS integrated the very best high-tech sound and video technology into the service. In 1987, NOS was considered to be a success and continued indefinitely… By the late 1980s, there were four hundred members of NOS (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 84).

NOS continued to grow into the 1990s; however, in 1995 it collapsed spectacularly with allegations that the leader, Reverend Chris Brain, had been involved in a number of inappropriate relationships with females who were part of the community. Once the first of these allegations had been made, more members of NOS began to allege that Brain was a controlling and manipulative leader. The scandal gained national media attention and NOS ended (Howard, 1996, 6).

Whilst NOS ended in controversy, it provided the catalyst for many other groups to experiment with new ways of worship – groups such as Visions, Third Sunday Service and The Late Late Service. It is also claimed that The Nine O'clock Service influenced not only the church but the wider creative culture. Roberts claimed that 'NOS's mass was the inspiration for *Enigma's* debut album' (Roberts, cited in Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 87), while Thornton believed that 'U2's Zoo TV was said to be inspired by NOS. It is important to realize that NOS was much more influential than church. Their multi-screen, postmodern use of imagery was a cultural trend at that time within the pop-culture scene' (Thornton, cited in Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 87).

In 1992, The Nine O'clock Service was invited to bring its 'Planetary Mass' service to the Christian Arts Festival, Greenbelt: 'NOS brought us an enormous, expansive, high-tech performance on the main stage – one of the most innovative in the history of Greenbelt' (Northup, 2003, 19). Since that time Greenbelt has continued to give space to alternative worship groups and emerging churches so that they can share their worship with a wider audience. Out of the festival other gatherings and networks started, one of which was The Harry Arts Festival (Harry) of the early 1990s, initiated by Tomlinson. Harry was aimed at Christians who had grown up in evangelical and restorationist churches, and it offered space to explore doubts and alternative theological solutions that may not have been allowed in a more restrictive church environment. For 20 years Tomlinson had been a leading figure within the restorationist movement, leading a team of 15 people and

giving apostolic oversight to over fifty churches; however, Harry was very different:

> Harry adopted a very experimental approach to worship, which – whilst it remained experimental – explored the use of symbol, story and discussion in a way unheard of in mainstream charismatic worship. Over time, Tomlinson became a point of refuge for young adults whose faith and life experiences could no longer be comfortably situated within the conservative house church context. He began a series of offbeat meetings in a pub in South London which eventually became known as Holy Joe's (Roberts, 1999, 11).

In 1995, the phrase 'post-evangelical' entered the British Christian vocabulary when Tomlinson published *The Post-Evangelical*: 'To be post-evangelical is to take as given many of the assumptions of the evangelical faith, while at the same time moving beyond its perceived limitations' (Tomlinson, 1995, 7). *The Post-Evangelical* was widely criticised by evangelical leaders in a way that is remarkably similar to Carson's critique of the emerging church. McGrath dismissed *The Post-Evangelical* as 'one of the most superficial and inadequate treatments of the contemporary state of evangelicalism which I have read' (Hilborn, 1997, 89), while Coates, leader of the Pioneer Network of Churches, said:

> I think churches – whether in homes, schools or pubs – which adapt to culture while remaining orthodox in faith and supernatural in approach are just what we need. If that is what Dave is saying, fine. But I don't think he's saying that. He's saying, for example, that it's OK for homosexuals to sleep together, which is something else altogether (Hilborn, 1997, 9).

However, *The Post-Evangelical* era gave many people within alternative worship a theological identity and sense of connectedness:

> The perception is that the evangelical emphasis on dogma and the right way to behave has often been at the expense of grace. Against a background of rising rates in divorce, a huge increase in couples living together and increasingly out

> gay and lesbian presence in society, evangelicals often come across as superior and judgemental...
>
> Another "post-evangelical" feature is the insistence on the right to question and debate, sometimes in faintly adolescent terms. People were tired of the narrow parameters for theological discussion which they perceived to be set by the evangelical world (Baker and Gay, 2003, X).

Cray (1997, 3-4) critiqued Tomlinson's association between the Enlightenment and evangelicalism, claiming that evangelicalism predates modernity, as evidenced in Bebbington (1989). Cray also stated that modernity brought about a recontextualisation of mission within evangelicalism but no real change in theological conviction and suggested three possible trajectories for post-evangelicals:

> The first is simply to change from one church tradition to another...
> A second possible outcome would be for some to depart from any recognisable form of Christianity altogether...
> The third possibility is that post-evangelicals might pioneer new forms of church, mission and evangelism. Holy Joe's in Brixton and some expressions of Alternative Worship are precisely this and I have considerable hopes that some significant developments for the whole church will continue to come from this quarter (Cray, 1997, 10).

It can be realistically suggested that the emerging church and Fresh Expressions are an outworking of the third trajectory that Cray identifies. The Nine O'clock Service, Holy Joe's and post-evangelicalism enabled groups of either dissatisfied or mission-minded Christians to think differently about church.

It was within this broader ecclesiastical context that I started Sanctus1 in Manchester city centre. In July 2001 I was appointed, by the Anglican Diocese of Manchester, as city centre missioner. The brief that I had was to explore

new ways of worship within the existing church buildings. Regarding the particular context I write:

> The city centre was redesigned as a modern European regional centre. It was reinvented as a commercial, retail and cultural centre. However, perhaps most significantly, the city centre was to be repopulated. The repopulation has been dramatic. Whereas, in 1991 there were 966 residents, the 2001 Census recorded that the number has risen to 5,496 residents, and in 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had the number at over 15,000.
>
> The demographic makeup of the residential community indicates that gentrification is taking place. It is the most expensive city centre outside London; penthouse apartments have been sold for £2 million; 40% of people have at least a first degree; and, perhaps most significantly, 82% are aged between 16 and 44 (Edson, 2008, 126-27).

After a short time it became clear, to me and the Diocese, that rather than only exploring new ways of worship a more creative approach to church was needed. This was the starting point for Sanctus1. The Sanctus1 story has been documented and the following extract, which I wrote for *The International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* (Edson, 2006), highlights the early development of the community:

> Sanctus1 started in October 2001 as an ecclesiological conversation with Mark and Laura Drane, a young Christian couple living in the city centre. We agreed to continue the conversation, met every Wednesday night and began to explore contextual ecclesiology. After a few weeks we realised that we *were* church: *Sanctus1* had started.
>
> We continued meeting every Wednesday night at 8pm. The time was significant, as it was the first manifestation of contextualisation. The city centre community is highly mobile, weekends are frequently spent visiting friends and family, so Sunday morning is not a viable time for church. We decided at an early stage to have our core meeting in the middle of the week, with extra events at other accessible times. As we sought to establish *Sanctus1*'s core community, we began to network and make contact with people in the city

> centre, and in February 2002 we had our first public act of worship, 'Sanctum', in Manchester Cathedral. The aim was to create a sacred space at the heart of the city centre. The service went well, was well attended, and we decided to keep the pattern of a once-monthly Sunday evening service and a weekly meeting on Wednesdays. Gradually, over the first two years, *Sanctus1* formed as a community. There were weeks when numbers were low, but we remained faithful to the vision. We launched a website, produced publicity material and continued to invite people along (Edson, 2006, 25).

Sanctus1 continued to evolve and grow. Initially growth was slow but in 2006 there were three midweek groups and two Sunday services, one of which was an alternative worship service and another an intergenerational service. Since November 2007, Sanctus1 has been meeting as one group on Wednesday evenings in a café in the city centre. It currently numbers approximately 60 people and has a leadership team of four people. In September 2009, I left Sanctus1 and a Methodist minister was appointed by the Anglican and Methodist churches to lead the community.

5.3: Core Practices of the Emerging Church

Sanctus1 is part of the two aforementioned wider movements, the Fresh Expressions initiative and the emerging church movement. There is an agreed definition of a Fresh Expressions of Church (See section 5.1) whereas not one clearly agreed definition applies to the emerging church. This is due, in part, to the movement not being tightly defined. However, the following definition is offered by one of the UK's leading researchers into the emerging church:

> The phrase "emerging church" is an attempt to express succinctly the re-imagining of church that has been taking place in the last 20 years as a response to our rapidly changing UK mission context (emergingchurch.info, 2003a).

Lings' succinct definition is important because its two points of focus are church and mission. The emerging church is a reimagining of church that

relates to the particular mission context of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In this definition, church and mission are placed together. Rather than offering a concise definition, Gibbs and Bolger (2005) instead choose to identify nine practices of the emerging church, three of which they regard as core practices (see section 5.1) which will now be critiqued and then correlated with writings from and about Sanctus1. This will enable us to see how these three values have been outworked in the narrative of this emerging church community.

The first value is to 'identify with the life of Jesus' (2005, 56). Gibbs and Bolger summarise this first value in the following way:

> In summary, when a crisis in confidence hit the church, emerging churches retrieved the life of Jesus as a reference point. In Jesus, they discovered a long-forgotten gospel, the idea that we have an invitation to participate with God in the redemption of the world. Emerging churches accepted this offer, and they joined the *missio Dei*, God's outward movement to humanity. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, and this is the message emerging churches seek to proclaim in their newly formed missional communities (2005, 64).

Whilst it may well be true that emerging churches seek to identify with the life of Jesus, this is also the case for all other Christian churches. However, Gibbs and Bolger's claim is that there is a particular focus on the whole of Jesus's ministry rather than a sole focus on his death on the cross. This insight highlights a previous overemphasis in certain parts of the church on Jesus's death. This is seen as a corrective move within the emerging church:

> The good news was not that Jesus was to die on the cross to forgive sins but that God had returned and all were invited to participate with him in this new way of life, in the redemption of the world (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 54).

It is worth noting here the focus on penal substitutionary atonement within the definition; one that I suggest is more pertinent to a US context than a UK one. Gibbs and Bolger claim that emerging churches seek to create missional

communities that follow the pattern set by Jesus, and that these communities will 'live distinctively as they seek to express the kingdom in all that they do' (2005, 59). Gibbs and Bolger acknowledge a 'little messiness' (2005, 63) within the emerging church discussions around kingdom, but they nonetheless offer the following conclusion:

> The kingdom, or the reign of God, is about our life here and now, and it is concerned not just with individual needs and aspirations but also with the well-being and mission of the community of Christ's representatives. It is directed beyond the present membership of the body of believers to encompass the world that Jesus came to save from the consequences of its rebellion by turning in a radically different direction. The gospel of emerging churches is not confined to personal salvation. It is social transformation arising from the presence and permeation of the reign of Christ. The gospel of the kingdom is prominent throughout the four gospels. Emerging churches are no longer satisfied with a reductionist, individualised and privatised message (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 63).

Gibbs and Bolger claim that there has been a paradigmatic shift away from a church focus to a kingdom focus (2005, 62). This is a bold claim, and one that can be critiqued and evaluated in the light of some of the kingdom insights offered by another movement in contextualised theology – liberation theology. The difference between these two contexts is substantial – one rich and affluent the other poor and marginalised – however, liberation theology offers insights into a new ecclesiological movement that has a particular focus on the kingdom and justice.

Whilst claiming to have a kingdom-centred approach to mission, the emerging church does not seem, on the whole, to be engaged politically in working against structural sin and injustice. I posit that a possible reason for this could be the aforementioned separation between personal sin and the kingdom. It seems that the kingdom within the emerging church movement is centred on being a community that embodies the values of the kingdom. Whilst this is to be commended, liberation theology highlights a political element to the values

of the kingdom, and often this political element can mean engaging with sinful structures of oppression. Whilst an over-focus on sin may be unhelpful, a lack of focus thereon can mean that the structural sin that creates injustice and exploitation is not engaged with. Liberation theology makes explicit the connection between sin, injustice and the kingdom:

> The fundamental obstacle to the kingdom, which is sin, is also the root of all misery and injustice; we see that the very meaning of the growth of the kingdom is also the ultimate precondition for a just society and a new humanity (Gutierrez, 1973, 103).

The connection between sin and the kingdom is not evidenced in the writing of Gibbs and Bolger. It can be suggested that the lack of political engagement and political theology of the emerging church is evidence of a selective approach to the kingdom, which fails to deal with the consequences of structural sin due to a previous over-focus thereon in some evangelical churches. This resonates with Tilby's (2008, 87) criticism that Fresh Expressions is too closely aligned with culture. She claims that church renewal comes from movements that protest against the culture rather than being closely aligned with it. Liberation theology has a kingdom focus, but this connects the search for justice with the coming of the kingdom. As Gutierrez says, 'The struggle for a just world in which there is no oppression, servitude, or alienated work will signify the coming of the Kingdom. The Kingdom and social injustice are incompatible' (1973, 97). The connection between kingdom and social injustice is not broadly apparent in the emerging church movement.

Returning to Sanctus1, how do they engage with this first value of identifying with the life of Jesus? In 2006, Sanctus1 produced a set of values which were written by church members and went through two reviews before they were affirmed corporately. The introduction to these values states:

> As a Christian community, Sanctus1 is made up of people who are either committed to, or are exploring a journey into, a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and with one another. As a community we have four shared values: welcoming, serving, rooted and missional (Corry, Drane and Sutton, 2008, 10).[13]

The missional value correlates most closely with the aforementioned practice of identifying with the life of Jesus:

> Missional: We believe that God is already active in our world, and aim to join with God in God's ongoing mission. This means that we are engaged in the changes happening in Manchester and the wider world. We believe that God has a vision to transform our city in ways that are just and which foster human flourishing (Corry, Drane and Sutton, 2008, 11).

It is a fascinating observation that this definition does not have the word 'church' within it. Mission in this case is not focused on bringing people into the church; rather, it is focused solely on bringing transformation to the city. This correlates with Gibbs and Bolger's first practice, namely a community focused on Christ (as the other values make clear) and engaged in bringing kingdom-focused transformation to the city. The second value is transforming the secular realm, and of this value the authors say:

> Emerging churches tear down the church practices that foster a secular mindset, namely that there are secular spaces, times or activities. To emerging churches all of life must be made sacred (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 68).

The use of the terms 'secular' and 'sacred' in a binary way is an oversimplification of secularisation, sacralisation and post-secularism (see section 2.6). Hence, at this point the popular nature of Gibbs and Bolger's research should be noted. The research does not engage in any depth with the secularisation and sacralisation theories; it simply claims that 'Sacralisation in emerging churches is about one thing: the destruction of the

[13] Sanctus1's values document can be found in Appendix A.

sacred/secular split of modernity' (2005, 66). It also does not explore post-secularism, so the question arises as to whether this is a response motivated by a desire for mission or whether it is a response dictated by a rejection of modernity. It is clear that the answer to this question is that their motivation is primarily a rejection of modernity and forms of church that the authors associate with it. In the same chapter they identify a move away from 'systematic to nonlinear' (2005, 68) as a shift away from modernity; a move away from 'Elitist cultural disconnect to engagement with visual culture' (2005, 70) and as a move away from elitism birthed in the reformation and an 'Embracing of both transcendence and immanence' (2005, 72), as 'in modernity, God could be either transcendent or immanent but not both' (2005, 72). It appears that this move to reject the secular/sacred divide is a rejection of the perceived values of modernity. The outworking of this move is engaged missionally, but I would suggest that the motivating factor is not mission.

Once again, how is this value of transforming the secular realm apparent in Sanctus1? Diffuse boundaries are apparent when visiting Sanctus1; secular music and films are commonly used within services and 'movies have always been important to us in worshipping. They have a powerful effect within a service, to introduce or expand upon a theme, as part of or leading into one of the core elements' (Corry, Drane and Sutton, 2008, 19). The use of secular films and music in worship is one example of the mutual penetration of the boundary between the secular and sacred. Other examples of this mutual penetration are 'II' – a club night run by Sanctus1 – the stand at the Annual Mind Body Spirit Festival in Manchester city centre and Nexus Arts Café within which they facilitate and curate the arts programme.

The question, posited by Tilby in Croft (2008, 87), is whether as a result of mutual penetration Sanctus1 loses its distinctiveness within a secular context and the ability to transform the secular. Within the context of the Mind Body Spirit Festival, I too identified the potential to lose distinctiveness: 'I want to

be in this environment sharing with these spiritual searchers, but I am aware that by being here we become just another product for the spiritual consumer' (emergingchurch.info, 2004a). Tilby's concern (2008, 87) that there may be syncretism with Fresh Expressions of Church resonates with the concern raised here. However, it appears that activities such as these are underpinned by a positive theological approach to culture, which arguably is open to the accusation of syncretism:

> We believe that God is already in the world and working in the world. We recognise God's indefinable presence in music, film, arts and other key areas of contemporary culture. We wish to affirm and enjoy the parts of our culture that give a voice to one of the many voices of God and challenge any areas that deafen the call of God and hence constrain human freedom (Sanctus1, 2009a).

The revised correlation approach to culture offers the most accurate definition of the relationship that Sanctus1 has with culture. This approach is based on Tillich's correlation theory, which has its most explicit formulation in the introduction to *Systematic Theology*:

> Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence. This is a circle which drives man to a point where question and answer are not separated...
>
> The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology from the sources, through the medium, under the norm (Tillich, 1951, 61-64).

Revised correlation theory moves away from the notion that theology answers those questions raised by culture and envisages a more complex approach where answers and questions come from both culture and theology. The apologetic and dialectic facets of revised correlation theory give it a degree of

defined inclusivity. Theologically, the church is one place where Christian 'fact' can be found, but there are other places where that 'fact' can be found, too:

> The word "fact" serves to remind us that Christianity is not something we invent. Christianity exists and demands rediscovery and interpretation… Second, the word "fact" [over message/tradition] is also meant to remind us that fact includes the whole range of classic texts, symbols, events, persons, images, rituals and practices from the New Testament forward (Tracy, 1981, 64).

The openness to dialogue with contemporary secular culture facilitates mutual penetration between 'common human experience and language' (Tracy, 1981, 64) and Christian 'fact', which consequently enables Sanctus1 to inhabit the secular sphere without feeling compromised. Examples of this are the aforementioned Mind Body Spirit Festival, II and Nexus Art Café.

The third thread that Gibbs and Bolger identify is that emerging churches live highly communal lives:

> Emerging churches confront deeply entrenched notions that church signifies a performance-based gathering. They believe that church is not a gathering at all. It is about community. Yes, there are meetings but they do not define church. The meetings are scheduled to support the life of the community or to flow out of the community, but they do not create the community (2005, 102).

Gibbs and Bolger give many examples, offered by emerging church leaders, of the value they place on community. They suggest that the creation of community gives a 'space for the kingdom to come' (2005, 89) and that the church 'lives as a committed community in this world, which desperately needs redemption' (2005, 90). They further claim that emerging churches gather around the values of the Kingdom rather than the values of the local church. Once again, the self-referential and US-centric nature of the research can be discerned in this chapter. This focus on community, which Gibbs and Bolger claim is a rediscovery of kingdom values, is also a reaction against new

paradigm churches:[14] 'Often in new paradigm churches, the only community expression in worship is the casual glance at other people who are enjoying their own personal worship' (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 93). The claim is made that new paradigm churches are individualistic, consumerist and self-indulgent whereas emerging churches are communitarian and kingdom-focused. Essentially, Gibbs and Bolger posit that emerging churches offer a form of 'alternative community' whereas new paradigm churches offer a form of 'cloakroom community'.

Brueggemann (2001) explores the Old Testament alternative community of Moses, starting by stating that 'the contemporary American church is so largely enculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act' (2001, 1). Brueggemann's central claim is that the church is called upon to act as a prophetic criticism of consumer society and that the task of the prophetic ministry within the church is to 'nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us' (2001, 3). The alternative community aims to dismantle the dominant consciousness rather than conforming to it.

Brueggemann, when looking to the alternative community of Moses, claims that this community had at its centre 'God's freedom as an alternative to the static imperial religion of order and triumph and a politics of justice and compassion as an alternative to the imperial politics of oppression' (Brueggemann, 2001, 9). The community of Moses is not about freeing a small band of people from their oppressor – it is about establishing an alternative community that provides an alternative social order to that of oppression and exploitation: 'Yahweh makes possible and requires an alternative theology and an alternative sociology' (Brueggemann, 2001, 9). The alternative community is the antithesis of the cloakroom community, a

[14] 'New paradigm churches' is the phrase that Gibbs and Bolger use to identify churches such as seeker churches and mega-churches. These new paradigm churches are largely, although not exclusively, a US phenomenon.

kingdom-focused community that is engaged with society and is committed to justice.

Gibbs and Bolger identify that emerging church leaders highlight the centrality of community to their churches. However, there is a lack of self-criticism within this process, and community is presented in a utopian way without the struggles of community being articulated. Many other forms of church are dismissed as a product of consumerism without the acknowledgment that this critique is also levelled at the emerging church. Whilst I agree with Gibbs and Bolger that community is central to emerging churches, the lack of critical engagement with the notions of inclusion and exclusion, pastoral care for the vulnerable and the homogenous unit principle are problematic.

Within Sanctus1, community can be identified as a central theme in their literature. In an introduction to Sanctus1 (Corry, Drane and Sutton, 2008, 8-9) the word is used four times and the Sanctus1 website has many references to being a community. In 2006 and 2008 in articles that I wrote about Sanctus1 I suggested that Sanctus1 offers a 'hermeneutic of communitas' (Edson, 2006, 32), or a 'hermeneutic of community' (Edson, 2008, 131). I still hold to this, but acknowledge that this is often the case for congregations. However, it is more accurate to refer to community, or communitas, as the hermeneutical key. In the past, sacred texts or actions have provided a hermeneutical key, a key through which meaning and purpose are found. Newbigin (1989, 222) identified community as a such a hermeneutical key. Referring to the congregation as the hermeneutic of the Gospel, Newbigin writes 'Jesus... did not write a book but formed a community. This community had at its heart the remembering and rehearsing of his words and deeds' (1989, 222).

In *The Ritual Process*, anthropologist Victor Turner introduces the term 'communitas' (1969, 94) when seeking to distinguish between two major modes of human interrelatedness:

> The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic position with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" and "less". The second, which emerges recognizable in the liminal periods, is of a society unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated communitas, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (1969, 96).

'Anti-structure' (1969, 106) is the name given by Turner to the second mode of society, and to this mode of social organisation Turner gives the name 'communitas' (1969, 96) as opposed to the more geographical or political term 'community'. Communitas arises out of situations of liminality, and Turner highlights that during the liminal stage a social structure of communitas forms that is based on common humanity and equality rather than recognised hierarchy.

After identifying communitas in tribal society, Turner identifies where it is present in modern Western society. He notes that some monastic orders (1969, 145) offer a more permanent experience of communitas and he claims that in the countercultural hippy movement of the 1960s communitas was present:

> In modern Western society, the values of communitas are strikingly present in the literature and behaviour of what came to be known as the "beat generation" who were succeeded by the "hippies"... These are the "cool" members of the adolescent and young-adult categories who "opt-out of the status-bound social system and acquire the status of the lowly..." They stress personal relationships rather than social obligations, and regard sexuality as a polymorphic instrument of immediate communitas rather than as the basis for any enduring social tie (Turner, 1969, 112-3).

The move from communitas to community as the hermeneutical key is significant, because communitas is a transitory state whereas community is more established. The first four years of Sanctus1 have been described as

communitas. However, communitas is always a temporary phase followed by aggregation into the structures of wider society, which has been the experience of Sanctus1. I propose that *Mission-Shaped Church* (Archbishops Council, 2004) started this process of aggregation. Once this aggregation started, Sanctus1 could no longer legitimately be viewed as communitas, so the terminology of community was used in the article of 2008. *Mission-Shaped Church* (Archbishops Council, 2004) and the Fresh Expressions initiative drew Sanctus1 into the structures of the wider church by legitimising and affirming it accordingly.[15] This wider legitimation brought with it external respectability and served located Sanctus1 in a denomination. A denomination that is pluralistically legitimate and hence Sanctus1 can be located in the Denomination category of the Wallis typology.

Gibbs and Bolger's research into the emerging church provides a useful chronological point of definition, yet the self-referential and self-defining nature of the research should be noted. Sanctus1 correlates broadly with their three core practices, and it is from there that we move to focus specifically on the mission practices of Sanctus1.

5.4: The Mission Practices of Sanctus1

My ethnographic research identified that Sanctus1 has an oblique mission practice that seeks to created dialogue spaces which operate within the mission parameters of a centred set. The principles of obliquity, dialogical spaces and centred set theory are the three key factors in such mission practices. It is to the first one of these that I now turn.

Polanyi's (1958, 1969) theory of focal knowledge and tacit knowledge offers a philosophical insight into the mission practices of Sanctus1. Polanyi wrote that we should start from the fact that 'we can know more than we can tell' (1969,

[15] The story of Sanctus1 is written up in the *Mission-Shaped Church* (Archbishops Council, 2004) report. This was the first piece of national public recognition that Sanctus1 received.

4), terming this pre-logical phase of knowing as 'tacit knowledge'. Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge is built upon the recognition that our awareness always has a certain characteristic structure. When we are sharply aware of anything we know it *focally* but we only know it in terms of its coherence to certain particulars, which are known *subsidiarily*. For example, when learning a new word a person may choose to focus on that word and hence use it a number of times; however, the meaning of that new word is conveyed by the subsidiary context within which it is set. Once the word has been learnt it ceases to become the focal point and instead becomes part of subsidiary language as it is used with the rest of language confidently and a-critically. It becomes part of tacit knowledge. Polanyi moves on to claim that all knowledge is tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge:

> All knowledge falls into one of these two classes: it is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge. The idea of strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory; deprived of their tacit coefficients, all spoken words, all formulae, all maps and graphs are strictly meaningless (Polanyi, 1969, 195).

Morisy (2004) uses this framework of tacit knowledge, with both the subsidiary and focal ways of knowing, to critique mission. Morisy's critique is that the church has made mission a focal point rather than allowing it to be subsidiary and hence part of our tacit knowledge. As it is no longer part of the corporate tacit knowledge of the church, the values and motivation of mission do not inform all the practices of the church:

> Polanyi warns that in complex situations it is possible to mistake subsidiary (tacit) awareness for focal awareness. This warning raises the possibility that we have fallen into this confusion in relation to mission. Could it be that we treat mission as focal awareness when in fact it is something that needs to remain tacit? Is there a danger that when mission becomes a self-conscious phenomenon it ceases to deliver its intended objective? By focusing on mission local churches bring into the conscious attention, what might best remain "tacit" or under the surface? (Morisy, 2004, 15).

Morisy, a passionate missiologist, argues that mission must be subsidiary and hence tacitly inform all the practices of the church. Within this framework she suggests that an oblique approach changes the focal point away from mission and onto the task or project: 'The art of leadership can be understood as the identification of a focal awareness around which we can organise our actions and which will operate obliquely to achieve our tacit and desired outcomes (Morisy, 2004, 17). When mission is part of subsidiary tacit knowledge, it shapes and informs the oblique route chosen to achieve focal awareness: 'The art, in complex circumstances, is to identity the oblique route by which one's objective can be achieved' (Morisy, 2004, 17).

The principle of obliquity was identified by John Kay in 1998 (Johnkay, 2009a) after he recognised that some of the most profitable businesses in America did not have an exceptional focus on profit:

> I first came to it in my research on characteristics of exceptionally successful companies. Whatever were their common features, exceptional focus on profitability did not seem to be among them. They were particularly profitable, but not particularly profit-oriented, and that is an important distinction (Johnkay, 2009a).

Kay called this paradox the principle of obliquity, claiming that some objectives are best pursued indirectly. In 2004, Kay expanded this principle further in an article for the *Financial Times*:

> Strange as it may seem, overcoming geographic obstacles, winning decisive battles or meeting global business targets are the type of goals often best achieved when pursued indirectly. This is the idea of obliquity. Oblique approaches are most effective in difficult terrain, or where outcomes depend on interactions with other people.
>
> If you want to go in one direction, the best route may involve going in the other. Paradoxical as it sounds, goals are more likely to be achieved when pursued indirectly. So the most profitable companies are not the most profit-

> oriented, and the happiest people are not those who make happiness their main aim. The name of this idea? Obliquity (Kay, 2004).

Through my research it can be ascertained that mission is part of the tacit knowledge and one of the overall aims of Sanctus1, and from this standpoint oblique approaches are used to achieve their missional aims. Mission therefore informs both the focal point and the oblique route chosen to achieve the overall aims of the community. An oblique route to mission is characterised by an indirect pursuit because 'paradoxical as it sounds, goals are more likely to be achieved when pursued indirectly' (Kay, 2010, 1). This approach to mission can be contrasted with a direct approach to evangelism that treats conversion as the focal point. The direct approach is explicit about the destination and asks for a response, whereas an oblique approach involves an organisation with a clear and tacit understanding of its purpose and identity, engaging in activities through which its overall intensions are furthered. The art project *40 Days of Public Solitude*, which took place during my research period, exemplified this oblique approach to mission, [16] this can be identified in a number of ways. For example, Sanctus1 did not offer a singular interpretation of the meaning of *40 Days of Public Solitude* but instead facilitated dialogue that explored the meaning of the project. During my research period a different participant in the project would offer reflections on their experience in the box. Some of the participants found it a creative and enjoyable experience whilst others were bored and frustrated. Each interpretation was promoted as a valid interpretation of the experience:

> I then interviewed that day's participant about his experience of the day. He said that the day was lonely and he felt incredibly vulnerable in the box. People

[16] 40 Days of Public Solitude was an art project that Sanctus1 ran during Lent 2009. The project involved recruiting 40 volunteers from the arts community of Manchester to spend a day in solitude in a glass-fronted installation box located in Nexus Art Café. This installation box could be seen on the street and in the adjoining café. The artist was filmed with a webcam, with the images being broadcast live on a dedicated website. Participants were allowed to take three objects with them into the installation box and were given a Bible, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, some water and a meal. The café space hosted an exhibition that documented the project, where each artist wrote a short explanation of their reasons for wanting to be part of the project.

> could come and say what they wanted to him and he had no way of responding.
>
> I asked him how he felt about the space now – was it a sacred space? He replied that not it was not a sacred space, but certainly a space that he did not want violating and a space that he felt a sense of connection to (Sanctus1 Fieldwork Diary, March 9th).

During the introductory evening to *40 Days of Public Solitude* four different interpretations were offered:

> 1: It was a reflection on Jesus's 40 days in the wilderness.
> 2: It was a comment on the loneliness felt by many people in the city centre and in contemporary society.
> 3: It was the trapped artist, isolated and misunderstood.
> 4: It was the experience of the mime artist on Market Street, where life is passing you by and you are a permanent installation (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, March 4th).

The *40 Days of Public Solitude* website and the publicity used to promote the exhibition offered no interpretation of the project. The press release stated that 'There are many interpretations for *40 Days of Public Solitude'* (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, Press Release). The final gathering, which drew together all the participants in the project (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Dairy, April 16th) was an opportunity to 'share experiences' rather than one person giving an overarching meaning for the project.

It is clear that the project does not prioritize theoria and there are two ways that this can be viewed: the project either lacked clarity and direction or this lack of direction was a deliberate decision to allow dialogue and interpretation to emerge. A direct approach to mission would offer a singular interpretation based on a central theoria and ask participants to engage from that singular perspective. Hence, the direction and purpose for the project would be explicit, with no room for ambiguity or interpretation. The aforementioned

research highlights that this direct approach was not employed. The lack of a singular interpretation appears to be a deliberate decision taken to enable a multiplicity of interpretations to emerge.

However, whilst there was freedom for different outcomes to emerge, identity was found through situating the project within a particular community of people and at a particular time. The clear identity of the project can hence be found in tacit subsidiary knowledge rather than a focal point. Identity was asserted in the timing of the project, 40 days before Easter during the season of Lent, tacitly placing it in the narrative of Christianity. The 'Bishop in a Box' event temporarily focused the tacit identity of the project by placing it within the narrative of Christianity.[17] Finally, the identity and connection to Sanctus1 was consistently in publicity materials which stated that the exhibition was 'brought to you by Sanctus1' and carried a link to the Sanctus1 website. The secure but tacit identity of the project was found by its location in a Christian community, during a Christian season and within the narrative of the Christian tradition.

5.5: Marks of Mission and Dialogical Spaces

Sanctus1 developed the art exhibition programme at Nexus art café for the 18 months prior to my period of research. During that time it was involved in the curatorial process for three exhibitions: *40 Days of Public Solitude*, *Dirty Mother* and *Gift*. *40 Days of Public Solitude* was a visual art exhibition and installation, *Dirty Mother* drew attention to climate change in partnership with *Christian Aid* and *Gift* was a reflection on consumerism based on Lewis Hyde's book *The Gift* (1983). These three exhibitions all engaged with one or more of the five marks of mission (see section 1.2) which were, and still are, an important statement that brought considerable clarity to discussion on mission. However, in 1999 they were 25 years old and the changing nature of

[17] The Bishop in a Box event involved the Bishop of Middleton spending some time in the installation space. This event served to draw considerable publicity to the *40 Days of Public Solitude* project.

contemporary society meant that the five marks were reviewed. One area that the review recognised was the importance of context:

> All mission is done in a particular setting – the context. So, although there is a fundamental unity to the good news, it is shaped by the great diversity of places, times and cultures in which we live, proclaim and embody it. The Five Marks should not lead us to think that there are only five ways of doing mission! (Missio, 1999a).

The first of the five marks of mission is 'To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom', and a Christian can adhere to this mark of mission by proclaiming the good news to passers-by. However, this monological approach to mission does not account, on the whole, for the subtle complexities of the context within which the Gospel is being proclaimed. A dialogical approach to mission, which I believe to be the approach in Sanctus1, seeks to take into account the context, as it involves mutual listening:

> Unfortunately, dialogue is not a process which is a priority in our churches, and in particular it is often absent in relation to our evangelistic efforts. The assumption at the heart of evangelism is that people will be changed by what Christians tell them or represent to them; it scarcely includes the expectation, essential to the process of dialogue, that such a transformation or change in outlook will work both ways (Morisy, 1997, 63).

This dialogical approach creates a space for mutual proclamation and mutual listening. Saxbee (1994) says that evangelism should 'put hearing before speaking' (43) to create a dialogical space which, according to research, is intrinsic to the identity of Sanctus1: 'We welcome dialogue between different theological positions but also recognise that dialogue involves listening and real listening involves change' (Sanctus1, 2009a). *Emerging Churches* (2005) reports one occasion when a monk from the Buddhist Centre in Manchester was invited along to Sanctus1:

> We didn't try to convert him. He was fully welcomed and full included and was really pleased to have been invited. We gave him a positive experience of the Christian community, which is in itself and important act of mission (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 133).

Dialogical spaces need to be contextual, and it appears that Sanctus1 is using art to create a contextual dialogical space in Manchester city centre – a space that allows proclamation only when coupled with listening. This is evidenced in the *40 Days of Public Solitude* closing event and also in the *Dirty Mother* exhibition and programme, which included a number of panels. One particular panel focused on faith and climate change and centred on dialogue between a Buddhist, Christian, Atheist and a Muslim. Tomlinson (2008) uses Martin Buber's philosophical essay *I and Thou* (1970) to offer further insight into the importance of dialogical spaces within mission:

> In practice, the I-Thou mode of interaction is created and sustained through dialogue and genuine conversation. But a basic requirement of real dialogue is that both parties are open to receive, to learn, to be enriched by the encounter (Tomlinson, 2008, 142).

An I-Thou relationship is one of respect, and it is through this type of relationship that a dialogue can take place that enables a contextual proclamation of the Gospel. This contextual proclamation is part of the mission practice of Sanctus1. Dialogue requires openness, and hence boundary crossing this would not be possible if a boundary was strictly defined. Therefore within a bounded set it is unlikely that the dialogue would occur and hence a different set model can be identified in Sanctus1.

5.6: The Mission Practices of the Centred Set

Section 4.4 introduces intrinsic and extrinsic sets, as defined by Hiebert in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (1994). It is my hypothesis that Sanctus1 operates as an extrinsic, well-formed set, also known as a

'centred set' (Hiebert, 1994, 122). Section 4.4 notes that there are two variables within set theory, namely whether a set is fuzzy or well-formed, or intrinsic or extrinsic: '*Extrinsic, or relational sets* are formed, not on the basis of what things are, but on their relationship to other things or a reference point' (1994, 111). Hiebert's second variable involves boundaries – he states that a set either has a sharp boundary or no boundary: 'Well-formed sets have a sharp boundary. Things either belong to the set or they do not. The result is a clear boundary between things that are inside and things that are outside of the category' (111). The characteristics of centred sets are:

> First, a centred set is created by defining a centre or reference point and the relationship of things to that centre...
>
> Second, while centred sets are not created by drawing boundaries, *they do have sharp boundaries* that separate things inside the set from those outside it...
>
> Third, there are two variables intrinsic to centred sets. The first is membership. All members of a set are full members and share fully in its functions. There are no second-class members. The second variable is distance from the centre. Some things are far from the centre and others near to it, but all are moving towards it...
>
> Fourth, centred sets have two types of change inherent in their structure. The first has to do with entry and exit from the set. Things headed away from the centre can turn and move toward it... The second type of change has to do with movement toward or away from the centre. Distance members can move toward the centre, and those near it can slide back while still headed towards it (Hiebert, 1994, 123-4).

From these four characteristics, Hiebert extrapolates four characteristics of Christianity, church and mission. There are points of convergence between the mission practices and ecclesiology of Sanctus1 and Hiebert's extrapolated characteristics, but there is also significant divergence. Hiebert's study is important but has limitations for this study, the greatest being that Hiebert is

referring to overseas mission and a people group indigenous to that particular context, therefore the contextual nature of Hiebert's work needs to be fully accounted for when studying his extrapolations further. With that proviso in mind, there now follows a study of his four missiological extrapolations from the characteristics of a centred set and, drawing from my ethnographic studies, Sanctus1's mission practices:

> First, we would make a sharp distinction between Christianity and non-Christian religions and would affirm the uniqueness of Christ as the only Lord and Saviour. Our primary aim would be to invite people to become followers of Jesus, not to prove that other religions are false (Hiebert, 1994, 130).

This characteristic seeks to define the identity of a centred set within a foreign context. The identity is defined through the marking of the centre point, which, in a foreign context, is particularly important because it produces definition. The centre for Hiebert is the uniqueness of Christ. However, it is important from a methodological point of view to note that the centre rather than the boundary is being marked. The primary aim of mission in a centred set is to invite people to engage with the centre point – Christ – rather than defining the boundaries.

The Christian centre to Sanctus1 is affirmed through their publicity materials and on their website which defines them as 'a Christian community'. Each time Sanctus1 met during my fieldwork three candles were lit, which appeared to be a ritual that defined their identity:

> We meet in the name of God, creator of the Universe (first candle lit)
> We meet in the name of Jesus, God's only son (second candle lit)
> We meet in the name of the Holy Spirit, midwife to new humanity (third candle lit)
>
> Come then,
> Eternal God
> Be present here

> Befriend us here
> Renew us here
> Amen (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, 4th February).

This ritual gives the congregation a sense of its Christian identity, and from this central identity the boundaries of the centred set are defined. It can be observed that there is no formalised membership within Sanctus1. During my fieldwork there was one evening where church members discussed participation, and through this the issue of belonging emerged:

> People began to talk about what it meant to belong to Sanctus1, and it was commented that the Sanctus1 values which were adopted in 2006 were our marks of belonging. Questions were then raised as to how widely these values were owned by Sanctus1. I mentioned that the leadership team publically affirmed these values in the last AGM and that previously, to be on the planning team, a person needed to agree to the values. It was also stressed that the values were very much relational and aspirational rather than dogmatic and rule-based (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, April 1st).

It appears that the values of Sanctus1 operate as the boundary marker, although the aspirational nature of the values means that the boundary is porous and not a defining factor of membership. This appears to be creating a problem with regard to membership, but from the perspective of mission the invitation that is offered is to engage with the centre rather than the boundary:

> Second, we would be willing to baptise those who make a profession of faith and not wait until they had shown signs of Christian maturity and perfection (Hiebert, 1994, 130).

Baptism in Hiebert's context is a sign of membership. His central standpoint on this issue is that baptism is about professing Christian faith rather than Christian maturity. Furthermore, it is about identifying oneself with the person at the centre of the set, namely Christ. This open approach to baptism means

that a person does not need to agree to a partisan statement of faith before they are baptised, because the only criterion for baptism is a profession of faith in Jesus. Again, the context of Hiebert's writing needs to be understood for this to be correlated with Sanctus1 in Manchester. Hiebert's writing addresses church planting in a culture where Christianity is alien, so for a person to be part of this Christian set they need to leave a different faith tradition. This is a radically different context to the contemporary multi-faith, post-Christendom society. However, the central argument is that a person is a member in relation to the centre rather than to any criteria of the set and this point is transferrable.

There is no formalised membership of Sanctus1, but it does have people who describe themselves as 'sanctonians', people who attend regularly and who contribute to the life of the community. These people see themselves and are seen but others as members of Sanctus1. They are all professing Christians and have been baptised into the Christian faith either at Sanctus1 or in previous church experiences. Their Christian identity is certain, and formalised membership to Sanctus1 is perceived as superfluous to this identity. One reason for this is that Sanctus1 has grown by attracting people who are 'de-churched':

> Forty per cent of the population are "de-churched." At some point in their life they attended church. Of these, 20 per cent are the "open de-churched" – people who have left church at some point, but are open to return if suitably contacted and invited.
>
> Twenty per cent of the population have attended church at some point in their life, but were damaged or disillusioned, and have no intention of returning (Archbishops Council, 2004, 37).

This people group does not exist in Hiebert's context. Baptism in Hiebert's context is a ritual through which a person becomes a member of this particular set rather than another one. Membership of Sanctus1, informal as it

may be, is a gradual process of assimilation rather than a moment that defines membership:

> People spoke of their experience of belonging within Sanctus1. A number of people commented that they felt that they belonged as soon as they arrived, while others commented that after coming for a few months they still felt that they did not belong. A number of people commented that an informal meeting with a member of the leadership team was the moment that they felt that they belonged (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, April 1st).

After a new person has come to Sanctus1 for a number of weeks, a member of the leadership team will ask them if they want to be part of the church's email list and if they want to meet for a coffee to talk about their experience. This meeting will usually consist of a conversation about how they found Sanctus1, what they are looking for in a church and how involved they want to be in the church. These meetings (evidenced by the quote above) help people to feel as though they belong. The lack of formalised membership but the centrality of Jesus to the people of Sanctus1 correlates with Hiebert's second mission characteristic of the centred set.

> Third, we would recognise that evangelism involves both a point of decision and a process of growth... (1994, 130).

The third characteristic of the centred set recognises that faith is a journey. Whilst Hiebert says that this is a process of growth, it is often the case that growth is not uniform and there will be moments where it stagnates or reverses. Nevertheless, a commitment to the process is key within this value, and this commitment to the process of growing faith is expressed through the regular attendance of Sanctus1 members.

From the perspective of mission, an important component is authentically journeying with people who are not part of Sanctus1, which involves being hospitable and welcoming. Through my ethnographic research and searching

the Sanctus1 website it appears that hospitality is important for the church. In October 2006, it hosted a service in Manchester Cathedral called *Dekhomai* (Sanctus1, 2007b), and within that service there was a spoken reflection on welcome and hospitality using Rublev's Icon of Trinity and the story in Genesis 18 of Abraham and Sarah welcoming the three strangers:

> A powerful story of welcome that has arguably more to say today than at any time in human history. There is talk of closing borders and banning the veil, where suspicion seems to dominate our society's interaction with anybody not like us... The story and this icon both say that as we welcome the stranger into our midst, whether our church or our country, we realise that the stranger is in fact an angel, and they bring immense blessing to us all (Sanctus1, 2007b).

The importance of hospitality is evidenced through this reflection. Hospitality is a practice that welcomes people at a variety of different stages on their faith journey. A further outworking of hospitality can also be evidenced by a series of posts on the Sanctus1 blog (Sanctus1, 2009b). These posts represented letters written to Sanctus1, by members of Sanctus1. A number of these letters reflect the welcome that people received:

> Dear Sanctus,
> Thank you for this space we make together of welcome, inclusion, companionship, laughter, love, care, compassion, journeying, questioning and exploration. Please never stop exploring; never be satisfied with easy answers. Keep going forwards in creativity and passion for life in all its fullness.
>
> Dear Sanctus,
> Please keep accepting those who simply desire acceptance for who they are.
> Thank you. The broken ones! (Sanctus1, 2009b).

Hospitality gives people a positive experience of a Christian community, which 'is in itself and important act of mission' (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005, 133). The hospitality that Sanctus1 offers enables the community to engage with others at different points on their faith journey, which raises a question with regard to the trajectory of that journey: Does Sanctus1 journey with people toward

the centre of the set or does it simply journey with people? However, the principle of obliquity means that it is highly unlikely that a direct path to the centre of the set will be apparent. It is therefore more likely that an oblique journey, which is resourced from the centre, is how progress will be made:

> Fourthly, we would turn leadership over to national leaders from the beginning. We would not wait until they had acquired a thorough theological training, but rather chose natural leaders (Hiebert, 1994, 131).

Once again, Hiebert is writing to a particular context; however, his central characteristic of mission in a centred set, which is transferable, is that leadership should be indigenous. Yet, in a networked, mobile context indigenous leadership is very different to localised leadership. During my period of ethnographic research, Sanctus1 had four members in its leadership team. All four of these people were indigenous to the networked context within which Sanctus1 was located, but none of them lived in the immediate locality. The theory of a network society (section 2.5) can move us beyond this geographically defined understanding of local, in that a person can be indigenous to a network of people. Sanctus1 is located in a geographic hub that operates within the network of Manchester city centre, so the leadership is indigenous to this network.

This insight gives us further understanding into the mission practices of Sanctus1, which has grown by locating itself within particular networks: the emerging church network, the city centre network and the arts network. It has engaged with the arts network, a network that Sanctus1 has a natural affinity to, through projects such as *40 Days of Public Solitude* and the Nexus Arts Café. This natural affinity can be evidenced by the disproportionally high number of people working in the creative industries that are part of Sanctus1. This natural affinity means that Sanctus1 is not engaged in cross-culture mission but mission to people within their own network and culture.

5.7: Conclusions

Sanctus1, Fresh Expressions and the emerging church are all engaged in an attempt to contextualise the Christian Gospel into contemporary society. It is a movement that has been birthed over the past thirty years, so it is still young. The mission practices that emerge from Sanctus1 highlight the complexities of mission in contemporary society. There appears to be both a desire for inclusion and welcome, yet also a desire for definition, as without this definition the community will fall prey to the accusation of syncretism.

The centred set model is helpful in understanding the mission practices of Sanctus1. It is also an area of significant difference between Sanctus1 and King's Church. King's Church is a bounded set and this boundedness shapes its mission practices, whereas Sanctus1's loose boundaries mean that the mission practices are not concerned with boundary crossing. The difference between the two set types can also be discerned in the difference between a denomination and a sect in the Wallis typology. Due to a denomination being pluralistically legitimate boundaries are less well defined that the sharply defined boundaries of the sect. Whilst the centre of Sanctus1 is well-defined it appears that the loose boundaries to the set are problematic for the community. This in turn creates a lack of clarity regarding belonging. This problem is true of many liberal Protestant churches, which although they might envy the cohesion and commitment of evangelical sects, cannot emulate the practices that play a large part in creating those characteristics as liberal Protestantism lacks the essential foundations for authoritarianism. Therefore, the sometimes invisible boundaries within Sanctus1 serve to create a lack of belonging, as people are unsure whether they belong or not.

The revised correlation theory of contextual theology provides a helpful framework to reflect on the relationship that Sanctus1 has with culture. It also serves to shed light on how its mission practices are an outworking of this contextual theology model. Dialogical spaces correlate directly with the

synthetic model of contextual theology, as does the openness of the centred set. Obliquity can be viewed either as a lack of confidence in the Christian proclamation or a recognition that in the complex world of the secular suspicion of religion, oblique processes open up pathways that would previously have been impassable. Sanctus1's mission practices are intuitive to the context within which they are located, and it is the contextual nature of their mission practices that is particularly interesting.

The creativity evidenced through my fieldwork into Sanctus1 highlights innovative mission practices. The creativity raises questions about the prioritisation of theoria, praxis or poiesis in the missiology of Sanctus1. In King's Church a clear boundary and defined theoria can be clearly seen; however, this is not the case for Sanctus1. This is one of the areas that is explored further in my conclusions that now follow.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Chapter 6 draws conclusions in response to my central question: 'What can be learnt from the mission practices that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre?' The questions from my research methodology in Chapter 3 provide the framework for this chapter.

The first conclusion that I draw concerns the relationship between contextual theology and mission practices in the two congregations. This conclusion highlights how the mission practices observed reflect the approach to context and hence the type of set that forms. The approach to context also has a significant bearing on whether the congregation is, according to the Wallis typology, a cult, sect, church or denomination.

My second conclusion develops the notion of a triadic missiology in which three complementary mission practices can be held together. This is based on the philosophical grounding of praxis, poiesis and theoria. The conclusion highlights how the two congregations prioritise these philosophical elements differently in their mission practices.

It is from the base of the first two conclusions that the final conclusion is drawn concerning the model and role of community within the two congregations. This conclusion concerns how the mission practices reflect the type of community and furthermore how the local community interacts with the network within which it finds identity. The chapter concludes by drawing together the theme conclusions and offering suggestions for future research.

6.1: Conclusions on the Mission Practices

The framework for my conclusions is provided by the research questions asked of both congregations (see section 3.3). These questions are:

Question 1: What relationship does this congregation have with culture?

Question 2: Are the mission practices of the congregation dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy?

Question 3: What are the roles of theoria, praxis and poiesis in this congregation?

Question 4: Does the idea of community play a significant role in the missiology and mission practices of the congregation? If so, which model of community, and how is it significant?

From these questions a theoretical framework emerges; a framework that notes difference in set types, the place of orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxis and the model of community being formed.

6.2: Conclusion 1: Contextual Mission Practices

My first conclusion concerns the relationship between contextual theology, set type and mission practices. It is my contention that the contextual theology of the congregation directly shapes the set type that forms, which in turn shapes the mission practices that emerge. However, in King's Church, the bounded nature of their ecclesiology means that the mission practices, set type and contextual theology are first shaped by their ecclesiology, whereas for the other congregation, Sanctus1, practices appear to have the capacity to shape ecclesiology. This conclusion has been reached, in part, through question 1

from my methodology: What relationship does this congregation have with culture?

The two congregations have a different theological approach to culture, which is a significant area of difference, and their approach to the culture of the city centre shapes and informs their mission practices. Through my research three models of contextual theology have surfaced within the two congregations: the countercultural, synthetic and translation models. There is an element of counterculture contextual theology in both congregations, but it is most manifest within King's Church; however, I think that it is not a pure countercultural contextual theology (if such a thing exists) but rather a fusing together of the countercultural model with the translation model. A different model is dominant within Sanctus1, the synthetic or correlation model, but this is of the revised variety (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2008, 268). It is to these models and the mission practices that I now turn.

The aforementioned countercultural model has a radical distrust for culture. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that it is not anti-cultural and it is mistaken to equate it with Niebhur's (2002) depiction of 'Christ against Culture'. This is an important distinction to make, as this model can often be misrepresented as anti-cultural when in reality it seeks to be countercultural. The distinction is subtle but fundamental. The anti-cultural position starts from a place of negativity towards the culture whereas the countercultural position aims 'to truly encounter and engage the context through respectful yet critical analysis and authentic gospel proclamation in word and deed' (Bevans, 1992, 119). It does not start from a point of negativity but one that recognises that the context needs critical engagement. However, the subtle danger is that practitioners of this model can easily become anti-cultural rather than countercultural and fall into the trap of past missionaries, who were accused of destroying cultures. The model does not seek to replace culture with a purer, more religious one, such as fundamentalist Christian or

Islam one rather, according to Bevans, it says that contextual theology is best done,

> By an analysis of the context and by respect for it and by allowing the Gospel to take the lead in the process so that the context is shaped and formed by the reality of the Gospel rather than vice versa (Bevans, 1992, 119).

This model seeks to seek out truth within the culture and establish a radical alternative to it. King's Church fuses this countercultural model together with the translational model. Bevans says that the unique element of the translational model is its insistence 'on the message of the Gospel as an unchanging message' (1992, 37), whilst Bosch refuses to recognise it as a proper model of contextual theology (1991, 421), as it does not take the context seriously enough:

> What makes this model specifically a translational model, however, is its insistence on the message of the Gospel as an unchanging model... tradition is not a model for daring and creative ways to state that message; it is conceived much more as a way of being faith to an essential content. The values and thought forms of culture and the structures of social change are understood not so much as good in themselves, but as convenient vehicles for this essential, unchanging deposit of truth (Bevans, 1992, 37).

Kraft's (1979) dynamic equivalence method of biblical translation seeks to elicit the same reaction from contemporary readers of the Bible as its original recipients. Kraft then applies this dynamic equivalence theory to theology, seeking to translate the doctrinal language of one culture into doctrinal language of another. Furthermore, Frost and Hirsch (2003), two contemporary missiologists, offer this model as it 'attempts to build safeguards that minimize the risk and limit of syncretism and a betrayal of the Gospel' (2003, 89). This model is clear that the Gospel message can be separated from a contextually bound expression. The Gospel therefore needs to be culturally 'unwrapped' to reveal the 'Gospel kernel', which is then inserted into a different context. This model, more than any other, takes most

seriously the message of Christianity recorded in the scriptures and seeks to pass that message on through an emphasis on retaining Christian identity, which is seen as more important than cultural identity or contextual reality. In essence this means retaining the boundaries.

This model can be seen clearly in King's Church (see section 4.3) and it appears that they define what constitutes the elusive 'Gospel kernel', which is done through a powerful combination of church elders and their interpretation of the Bible (see section 4.5). The model starts with the presupposition that every culture is roughly the same and that what is important to one culture will be important to another. This model does not allow culture to be affirmed as revealing the presence of God, but it is rather something to be stripped away because it conceals God. This is where we see the countercultural model of contextual theology emerging, wherein the line between the two models is thin and it is very easy for practitioners of the translational model of contextual theology to move into the countercultural model. This is clearly evident in King's Church, where the elders often speak of the city in an extremely negative way:

> Yet, when I look at this city, that is under the influence of the enemy, I know it is not right. There are hundreds of thousands steeped in sin, Satan has deceived them, loads suffering, the poor, the homeless, demon oppression. Our city promotes promiscuity, homosexuality and all forms of debauchery. These are not the will of God (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 4).

The quote highlights that the city is not seen as a positive place for revealing the presence of God but is rather a place under the 'influence of the enemy'. This highlights that King's Church has moved into an anti-cultural approach to the city. Therefore as the context is viewed in such a negative way, and as the Gospel kernel is already defined, mission practices do not have the capacity to shape theology. This approach to context is true of sects:

> Possession of truth implies a superiority over those too blind to see, too deaf to hear. The purity of truth must be maintained against those who might pollute it and its protection therefore requires extensive control over those to whom access is permitted. Hostility to state and the wider society is generated by actual or threatened conflict over alternative visions of the truth (Wallis, 43, 1975).

Both the sect and King's Church view the context in a hostile way. As the approach the context is hostile the mission practices that emerge reflect this hostility, this can be clearly seen in the quote from Week 4 of my fieldwork diary. The mission practices therefore do not start with the missiological conviction that God is already at work in the world, rather they start with the sectarian conviction that the sect posses the truth and this truth is to be shared with the world outside.

The approach of Sanctus1 to their context is significantly different. The model of contextual theology prevalent within the mission practices of Sanctus1 is the synthetic or correlation model:

> The correlation model conceives of theological reflection as occurring via a process of conversation (or "correlation") between Christian revelation and surrounding culture. It understands the emergence of Christian practical wisdom as a synthesis between tradition and secular culture, such as philosophy, the arts, politic or natural sciences (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2008, 268).

This model has a dialectical approach, as it seeks to listen to both the context and the tradition. Significantly, this model opens up theology to renewal from cultural insights and is developed in section 5.6 in specific reference to Sanctus1. As I stated at the start of this conclusion it is my contention that contextual theology leads to a particular set type forming, which in turn shapes (and is potentially shaped by) mission practices. There are three different types of contextual theology in the two congregations and two different set types have emerged. In section 5.6, I identify that Sanctus1 is a

centred set with porous boundaries, and in section 4.4 I identify that King's Church is a well-formed bounded set.

The subordinate nature of the context to the supracultural core within the translational model (the model apparent in King's Church) of contextual theology creates a sharp boundary between the context and the congregation. In turn, it is this boundary that serves to define the congregation, so the highly defined supracultural core determines that the congregation becomes a well-formed bounded set. [18] The synthetic model of contextual theology that Sanctus1 employs has a dialogical approach to culture, which means that the marking of the boundary between the set and the culture is not as clear as in the translational model. The boundary that is in place within Sanctus1 is porous and is not a defining factor in their identity. Identity, however, is found through a centre that enables the congregation to be distinguished from the surrounding culture. The centre of the set is that which people gather around, and it is this that gives identity. This certainty of identity in the centre and an openness to culture means that the synthetic model of contextual theology creates, in this instance, a centred set. For Sanctus1, its porous boundaries mean that identity can be problematic.

Interestingly, points of resonance can be found in Chambers' (2005) research into congregations in Swansea, Wales. He explores the relationship between the surrounding culture and sectarian groupings and an inclusive state church. These two groups are similar to King's Church (sectarian grouping) and Sanctus1 (liberal state church):

> Sectarian groupings holding a strong set of beliefs that are out of step with societal norms and a distinctive lifestyle that marks them out from their surrounding social surroundings might be said to exhibit high tension with

[18] In the 1950s, Smalley and Fetzer used the terms *supercultural* and *superculture* to refer to God's transcendent relationship with culture. The 'super' prefix was developed by analogy with supernatural; however, it was felt that the widespread use terms of such as *superman* and *superstar* could create misunderstanding and hence the prefix 'supra' is now preferred. See Kraft, *Culture, Communication and Christianity*, 2001, 312.

> society. Conversely, an inclusive state church with a liberal outlook might be in low tension with society (2005, 220).

If a congregation is (as with King's Church) in high tension with society, the boundaries will be defined sharply, whereas if the congregation is in low tension with society (as with Sanctus1), the barriers are less sharply defined. One of Chambers' conclusions is particularly interesting with regard to this piece of research into mission practices. He concludes that 'Where the institutional characteristics of churches exhibit a high degree of similarity with surrounding institutions, this better enables catchment populations to make the transition to attendance and, potentially, membership' (2005, 220). Sanctus1's low tension with society and porous boundaries mean that there is a high amount of similarity between the surrounding institutions and the congregation, so, in theory, crossing the boundary into the congregation should therefore be easier.

Finally, in this first conclusion, I turn to the types of mission practices that emerge from the contextual theology and the set type. As previously mentioned, King's Church fuses together the countercultural and the translation models. The key presupposition with the translation model is that the basic message of Christianity is supracultural, and this supracultural Gospel core needs to be translated to the cultural context so that a dynamic-equivalence is achieved (Kraft, 1979). Defining and communicating the supracultural core is key within a translational model of contextual theology, so communicating this core is key in the mission practices of King's Church. To provide this supracultural core a form of leadership and organisational structure is needed that this unquestionable and certain. Section 4.5 highlights how the bounded nature of King's Church serves to uphold a bounded ecclesiology that places all authority in the elders and their interpretation of the Bible. The elders control the definition of the supracontextual core, as their interpretation of the Bible is unquestionable. It

is this supracultural core that is then communicated in mission practices to those outside of the church.

In section 5.5 I identify that Sanctus1 has a synthetic approach to culture, and from this dialogical approach mission practices emerge. This model holds to the ideal that particular subjects of a culture are best for constructing its theology. This is true of Sanctus1, where the mission practices that have emerged have been constructed by a community of people who are indigenous to the network of the city centre of Manchester. The strongest aspect of the synthetic model is its basic methodological attitude of openness and dialogue enabling truth to emerge through dialogue. However, this dialogical attitude brings with it the critique that classic formulations of faith are watered down. Tracy (1987) argues that this is a misunderstanding and that dialogical approaches to culture can involve an encounter with truth that brings about change:

> Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it (Tracy, 1987, 18).

Dialogue, for Tracy, is not simply a process of sharing thoughts to create an amorphous centre but also involves challenge and change. This openness can be positive, but practitioners must also be aware of the subtle power manipulations of the dominant culture. The danger is that the theology falls prey to the criticism that it is weak or wishy-washy. If this is the case, then the theology that emerges is not a true synthesis but a juxtaposition of ideas that do not enhance one another.

The mission practices of Sanctus1, as observed in projects such as *40 days of Public Solitude*, are dialogical, but due to porous boundaries these mission

practices are not as clearly defined as in King's Church. The mission practices of both Sanctus1 and King's Church emerge from their contextual theology and in turn their set type, which leads to further discussion regarding whether mission practices have the capacity to shape the supracultural core and also which type of community is being formed. These two areas form my next two conclusions.

6.3: Conclusion 2: Engagement between Poiesis, Praxis and Theoria

This conclusion, which is based on the roles of poiesis, praxis and theoria within the mission practices of both churches, overlaps considerably with the roles of orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxis within the communities. If praxis is important in the mission practices of the community, orthopraxis will also be important, while theoria correlates with orthodoxy and poiesis with orthopathy. This part of my conclusion will focus on poiesis, praxis and theoria before relating it to orthopathy, orthopraxis and orthodoxy. This concurs with questions 2 and 3 from my research methodology.

> Question 2: Is the mission practice of the congregation dominated by orthopathy, orthopraxis or orthodoxy?
>
> Question 3: What is the role of theoria, praxis and poiesis in this congregation? Bosch (1991, 431) claims that contemporary missiology should seek to bring together. This question explores the relationship between these elements in the mission practices of the two churches within this study.

To enable these two questions to illuminate the mission practices of the two congregations it is first necessary to understand the philosophical background to poiesis, praxis and theoria. Aristotle (Ross and Brown, 2009, 103) distinguishes human activities into three different types: praxis, theoria and poiesis. These categories corresponding to different forms of human activities: contemplative (theoria), practical (praxis) and productive (poiesis). In *Nicomachean Ethics* he states 'Now this kind of intellect and of truth is

practical; of the intellect which is *contemplative*, not practical nor *productive'* (2009, 103). From this we can discern two distinctions – firstly a contrast between the practical and the contemplative, and secondly tension between the practical and the productive. The first distinction refers to the classical debate on which is the best way to fulfilment and happiness – is it contemplation or practice? Aristotle is saying clearly that the contemplative (theoria) is distinct from the practical (praxis) and productive (poiesis) and in this distinction places a higher value on the contemplative.

Etymologically poiesis is derived from the late-Greek word *poieo* which means to 'make' or 'do'. This word was first a verb, an action that transforms, brings forth and continues the world. In all transformation and bringing forth there is a type of creating or poiesis within which there is a movement beyond the temporal cycle of life. For Diotima (Plato, 2003, 132), this movement can happen in three ways – revealing three different kinds of poiesis. The first is natural poiesis through sexual procreation, the second is poiesis through the attainment of heroic fame and finally poiesis in the soul through the cultivation of virtue and knowledge.

Stackhouse (1988) offers the following missiological definition of praxis, theoria and poiesis as he starts to apply some philosophical concepts to contextual missiology and the practice of mission:

> *Poiesis* involves imaginative creation or representation of evocative images. It includes the kind of awareness and orientation to life that can be discovered by aesthetic and kinaesthetic experience. *Theoria* involves observation, reporting, interpretation, and critical evaluation. It thus includes all that can be known by analysis, systematic study, reflection and contemplation. The central issues of *theoria* are less aesthetic or kinaesthetic than the ontological, metaphysical and epistemic. In contrast to these, *praxis* involves intentional, practical engagement whereby people seek to do something for the common good (Stackhouse, 1988, 84-85).

Bosch highlights that in contextual missiology the priority of either theoria or praxis has been debated for some time, but he nevertheless settles on the view that 'there is no praxis without theory, even where the theory is not spelled out' (1991, 431). In many ways this returns to the Aristotelian priority of theoria over praxis. Bosch is stating that theoria has a primacy over praxis and poiesis because it informs and shapes both elements. Nonetheless, he moves on to state that the 'best models of contextual theology succeed in holding together in creative tension theoria, praxis and poiesis' (1991, 431). Gutierrez (1988, xxxiv) recognised the need for the dialogue between praxis and theoria – an important step in contextual theology (Fabella and Torres, 1983; Kuhn, 1970; Lugg, 1987, 179-81) – although this has been a dialogue rather than a trialogue, as poiesis has been missing.

Both congregations have a religious identity that has formed them and is central to their mission practices – a theoria. The differences that emerge are dependent on how well-defined the theoria is. It seems that when this theoria is tightly defined then it is of highest priority in the trialogical relationship, whereas when it is more loosely defined it becomes an equal partner in the trialogue. When the theoria informs the trialogue it becomes more diffuse, whereas when it is prioritised the theoria is the dominant factor in the mission practices of the community.

Unsurprisingly, King's Church has a tightly defined theoria and a greater priority is placed thereon – this is in part an outworking of their contextual theology and set type: '[The] inerrant, infallible Bible... is the supreme source of truth' in King's Church, [as] it gives the final authority in all matters of faith and doctrine' (King's Church, 2009b). However, the Bible is in a symbiotic relationship with church leaders, who interpret and teach its message to the congregation (see section 4.5). The extra canonical belief in an inerrant Bible coupled with a leadership that dictates its interpretation elevates the leadership's interpretation of the Bible as the supreme source of truth. Hence,

in their mission practice, the sharing of their theoria – their source of truth – is prioritised above praxis and poiesis.

In my methodology I noted a shift occurring in practical theology whereby practices have the capacity to shape theology. Praxis and theoria start to converse with one another as equal partners. However, for this to happen there must be an element of openness from both parties – theoria must not be so tightly defined that praxis is always subservient, while praxis must not be so fluid that it resists definition at all costs. Within King's Church I observed the prioritisation of theoria over praxis in both mission practices and ecclesiology, meaning that the mission practices of King's Church do not have the capacity to shape their supracultural core. Moreover, praxis cannot shape theoria.

Nonetheless, whilst *Sanctus1* has a clear Christian identity, aligning it to a particular belief system, there is a degree of fluidity within this notion. This fluidity within theoria can be seen in the Sanctus1 value of being rooted:

> Sanctus1 is a Christian community which interacts with the Bible as we recognise God's unique presence within it. We draw from a rich vein of Christian tradition across denominations, including the Nicene Creed, as it informs our everyday lives and guides us into the future (Sanctus1, 2009a).

A notable difference between this statement and the one from King's Church is that Sanctus1's relationship with the Bible is defined by an interaction therewith. This starting point suggests that the relationship with the Bible is one of fluidity and dialogue compared with a relationship that has an inerrant Bible as a fixed endpoint. Secondly, there is a degree of inclusion within this statement, as it seeks to draw from Christian tradition across denominations. However, whilst theoria has this foundational role, my research highlights that poiesis is dominant in the mission practices of Sanctus1.

Poiesis involves the imaginative creation or representation of evocative images, and as Stackhouse says it can 'includes the kind of awareness and orientation to life that can be discovered by aesthetic and kinaesthetic experience' (Stackhouse, 1988, 84). The prioritisation of poiesis in Sanctus1 can be seen in *40 Days of Public Solitude* and Sanctus1's historic and ongoing commitment to the arts. This project was a clear example of a kinaesthetic experience that enabled the participants to understand the theoria of the church. The concept of a person being locked in a glass-fronted installation space proved to be an 'evocative image' (Stackhouse, 1988, 84) that drew a great deal of media attention and facilitated dialogue around belonging, loneliness and the Christian season of Lent. There was an aesthetic experience for those watching the project, either on the street, in the café or online, and also an aesthetic experience in the exhibition that developed around the concept. It was a creative project that explored an important Christian season through modern media and the arts. My fieldwork diary highlights that poiesis is an important factor in the on going life of Sanctus1, as well as a strand in its mission practice (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, Feb 25th). Learning would often be kinaesthetic or experiential, and creative videos and images were used to discover more about the Christian faith. It should be noted that during my ethnographic research a greater degree of creativity appeared to be manifest in the outworking of the mission practices of Sanctus1 rather than in the corporate experience of worship. It appears that this shift has occurred in the last two years and correlates with the move to Nexus Art Café. Evidence of this can be seen on the Fresh Expressions DVD *Expressions* (Ivison, 2006), which featured Sanctus1 at a point when it offered highly creative alternative worship services by using visual art in its services. Poiesis was manifest in worship, whereas now it appears that it is more manifest in mission.

I did not identify a prioritisation of poiesis within the mission practices or any aspect of King's Church – on the whole, in fact, poiesis was missing. For example, the worship space was functional but not aesthetically inspiring, and

sacramental rituals, which are both an aesthetic and kinaesthetic experience, were also functional. My fieldwork diary notes that baptism 'felt like a bolt-on' and communion 'was chaotic' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, Week 7). The dominance of theoria in this context means that poiesis is not part of the mission practices and praxis is only valid when it becomes an opportunity to share theoria. This can be seen in the V.I.P. night during which homeless and vulnerably housed people from Manchester were given a meal, after which a Christian message was shared and an evangelistic altar call made: 'Elder1 then closed the presentation part of the evening with an evangelistic call. He told people that Jesus was available to all of them and that all they needed to do was ask him into their lives' (King's Church, Fieldwork Diary, V.I.P. Night). Both poiesis and praxis are subservient to theoria.

Within Sanctus1, *40 Days of Public Solitude* drew attention to the problems of loneliness and isolation in the city, yet it should be noted that there was no practical action to address this problem. The intercessions during one Wednesday night service were focused on justice issues (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, April 8th), suggesting a level of awareness on the subject, but at that point in the narrative of Sanctus1 there was no practical action. As previously noted (section 5.5), the arts programme that Sanctus1 developed focused on issues such as climate change or consumerism, this appears to be a further way that Sanctus1 was engaging with issues of justice and injustice. This engagement, through the creative arts rather than praxis, raises awareness, which is an important step in the fight against injustice; but it is not practically rooted – it is not praxis.

Due to the loosely defined theoria at the centre of Sanctus1, both praxis and poiesis have the capacity to shape the supracultural core. This shaping is limited to within the Christian tradition. However, the tightly defined theoria of King's Church means that the supracultural core at the centre of the community is formed and bounded and only the elders can shape it, which means that praxis and poiesis cannot shape the theoria. Mission practices for

King's Church are focused on sharing their theoria, whereas for Sanctus1 the mission practices are an outworking of their dialogical context theology. This means that - poiesis-focused mission practices have the capacity to shape congregations, which has a significant bearing on the type of community that forms, and it is to this that we now turn.

6.4: Conclusion 3: Community

A significant area of learning that has emerged from my research question concerns the role of community in the mission practices of the two congregations. Creating an experience and a place of community is a key theme that runs throughout my thesis. This has arisen in response to question 4 of my research methodology: Does the idea of community play a significant role in the mission practices of the congregation?

Various different models of community have been presented in this thesis – King's Church can be defined as an ethnic community where the boundaries provide definition and Sanctus1, due to its uncertainty of identity, is caught between the polarities of an alternative and a cloakroom community. Nonetheless, whilst community is apparent in both congregations there is divergence with regard to the importance of community in mission. For Sanctus1, the importance of community is stated explicitly, whereas for King's Church it is not. Moreover, community is used as a mark of definition for Sanctus1, whereas within the King's Church community it is a by-product of tightly defined boundaries.

Bauman's 'ethnic community' (2000, 172) offers a helpful insight into belonging within community. Bauman refers to a nation state and how a person belongs to that ethnic community. He suggests that an ethnic community is one that seeks homogeneity, and once a person belongs to this ethnic community, their sense of belonging and the values of the ethnic community spur their actions. Furthermore, their actions and practices reflect

the values of the community. Therefore, central to the ethnic community is definition, which may originate through the premise that one has little choice in such ethnicity; however, from the perspective of this piece of research the ethnic community is one of choice. Bauman claims that the ethnic community is sought by people because its main appeal is 'the promise of a safe haven, the dream destination for sailors lost in a turbulent sea of constant, unpredictable and confusing change' (Bauman, 2000, 171). Boundaries define the ethnic community, so the importance placed on boundaries points to some correlation with King's Church as a bounded set. The city outside of the community is seen as a hostile place. For some, these sharp boundaries between insider and outsider, and church and culture, are theologically problematic, but there can be no doubt that they have contributed to the growth of King's Church and other forms of similar religions. King's Church provides the 'safe haven' that Bauman refers to, and in their theology of mission and mission practices the promise of a 'safe haven' is paramount. Interestingly, Chambers (2005) draws similar conclusions based on congregational studies in Swansea. Although rather than identifying the community that forms in a positive way as a 'safe haven', he interprets it instead in a negative way – as a ghetto:

> A recurrent theme throughout all the case studies has been the erosion of the customary understanding of community. As the meaning of community has changed and as organised religion has become progressively privatized, this has become a growing problem for churches. For evangelical churches this has often been compounded by a world-rejecting philosophy that can, if left unchecked, result in a ghetto mentality with fairly obvious consequences as regards to sustained interaction with those outside the fold (Chambers, 2005, 195).

Interestingly, this can be contrasted with Sanctus1, which has a dialogical approach to culture where boundaries are blurred and dialogical mission practices emerge. King's Church is a clear example of an ethnic community, and whilst the sense of being part of a community is not an overt theme in

King's Church, the ideologies embodied in an ethnic community are key strands in the mission practices of the institution. This ideology can be seen in the way that patriotism and nationalism provide definition within an ethnic community:

> Patriotism on the whole pays tribute to the modern creed of the unfinishedness, the pliability of humans: it may therefore declare with a clear conscience that the call to "'close ranks" is an open and standing invitation, that joining the ranks is a matter of choices made, and that all that is required is that one makes the right choice and remains loyal to it through thick and thin for ever after. Nationalism, on the other hand, is more like the Calvinist version of salvation or St. Augustine's idea of free will: it puts little trust in choice – you are either "one of us" of you are not, and in either case you can do little, perhaps nothing at all, to change it (Bauman, 2000, 175).

There is a subtle but important distinction here. Patriotism welcomes a diversity of people into the community and then assimilates them; nationalism, on the other hand, rejects people who are not like them. Whilst patriotism, at least on the face of it, is more hospitable and tolerant, it still seeks homogeneity. Additionally, it seeks homogeneity by assimilation, whereas nationalism seeks it by exclusion. Central within both patriotism and nationalism is the desire to create homogeneity. King's Church has a patriotic approach to non-Christians and to Christians willing to join their congregation from other congregations. However, its approach to different denominations and other traditions within Christianity is ideologically nationalistic, because the desire for theological homogeneity can be identified in the tightly bound nature of King's Church. Furthermore, there is a diversity of people within King's Church, but in order to belong, a person must agree to the church's statement of faith and be baptised in the Spirit. The boundary markers that define the community create one that operates in a similar way to Bauman's ethnic community and Wallis' sect, so the mission practices exhibited by members are markers of belonging within this ghettoised ethnic community.

Bauman's ethnic community also offers a helpful insight into Sanctus1. Christianity is the central ethnic thread that brings unity, but porous boundaries mean that there is some theological heterogeneity within the central ethnic thread of Christianity. The breadth of theology within the religion means that it cannot produce homogeneity on its own, unless boundaries are formed to provide that definition. Sanctus1 does not have these boundaries, so is more heterogeneous, firstly due to its synthetic contextual theology that seeks dialogue and secondly due to its suspicion of boundaries in a pluralistic context. This suspicion of boundaries means that the community is not as tightly defined as that of King's Church, so some perceive the community as an alternative community whilst others use the community as a cloakroom community (section 5.1). This creates some tension within the congregations as to where their identity can be found. There is a desire to create a countercultural alternative community, yet their model of contextual theology is deeply positive towards culture and hence does not enable identity to be found in resistance. Resistance is instead directed towards the established church, but as they are part of the church, they paradoxically serve to legitimate it:

> Legitimatizing identity generates a civil society; that is, a set of organisations and institutions; that is, a set of organisations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organised social actors, which reproduce, albeit sometimes in a conflictive manner, the identity that rationalizes the sources of structure domination (Castells, 1997, 8).

There may be a desire to have a resistance identity, but close ties to both the Anglican and Methodist churches mean that resistance is futile. This highlights one of the tensions that I observed during my ethnographic research (Sanctus1, Fieldwork Diary, April 1st).

A further area of learning with regards to mission practices and community is the place of the networked communities. The two congregations are associated with particular networks, in which identity is found. King's Church

is part of ‘Ministries Without Borders’ and Sanctus1 is part of the informal emerging church network and the Fresh Expressions network. However, both congregations are not solely networked-based, as they both have a commitment to the city centre. They draw from the resources of the network to facilitate the local setting, yet growth has come through a positioning within a particular network. The fusion of the network with the local is significant in both congregations, and Chambers offers further reflection on this point as follows:

> It follows that under these conditions churches can no longer take their potential catchment populations for granted. They need to identify those networks of individuals or groups in the community that most clearly match their own collective, social and cultural characteristics and seek either to establish or exploit existing relations to a degree where the level of trust outweighs perceptions of risk (2005, 221).

This is an important area of learning, as a shift to mission based on networks creates hybrid religious congregations, which are both committed to the local setting and have a presence in a network, and within these hybrid congregations there is a hybridisation of mission practices. Nonetheless, this hybridisation is selective and there are networks and local communities that are overlooked. Networks in their identity are selective and self-referring, so there are people who do not find themselves within these networks. This can be contrasted with the idealised understanding of a parish church as the church for all the people who live in the parish and is therefore inclusive of all. Whilst this idealised view is often not the reality, it is a theological commitment to the inclusion of all. Neither congregation in this study has the systemic inclusion of the parish church, but Sanctus1’s denominational identity means that it is part of an inclusive structure, while for King’s Church this is not the case.

6.5: Conclusions: Contextualised Mission Practices

My research question, which I sought to answer through my ethnographic research, was: 'What can be learnt from the mission practices that have emerged from new church congregations in Manchester city centre?' I approached both communities from the point of view of four questions, in order to explore their mission practices. From this research it has become clear that mission practices emerge that are congruent with their contextual theology – in essence, contextualised mission practices. This is the greatest similarity in both communities, yet the different models of contextual theology mean that their mission practices are very different. Arguably, both sets of mission practice are an authentic contextual response to the city centre of Manchester.

Centred and bounded set models provide a framework for difference between the mission practices of the two churches. The bounded set of King's Church means that boundaries are important for providing definitions, as a rite of membership and in mission practices. The bounded set provides a sense of certainty in an ever-changing world where lines are clearly drawn, whereas the centred set is far more fluid and open. These two set models offer a sense of belonging, one with high commitment and the other with low commitment. Therefore, the mission practices that emerge are congruent with the set model.

However, perhaps the most significant conclusion that I have drawn is in regards to bringing poiesis into dialogue with praxis and theoria. This is an area that warrants further development. Practical theology has sought to bring practice into dialogue with theology (praxis and theoria), but there is a dialogue partner missing: poiesis. This dialogue partner has been articulated in words such as 'numinous', 'beauty' or 'ethereal', as it speaks of meaning being found beyond both theoria and praxis. In regards to contextual missiology, Kuhn argued in 1970 that 'thought is no longer conceived to be

prior to being, or reason to action; rather, they stand or fall together' (Lugg, 1987). However, even since this significant move forward, poiesis has still been missing.

If the community has a priority on theoria then orthodoxy is prioritised; if praxis then orthopraxis is prioritised; and if poiesis then orthopathy. In the mission practices of both congregations it can be concluded that neither of them holds all three types of human activity in balance, because both congregations have a particular focus depending on the value placed on poiesis, praxis or theoria within the church. Sanctus1's mission practices includes a dialogical relationship between theoria and poiesis, and praxis, whilst not entirely absent, is not central in this dialogue; it is not a trialogue. The synthesis that takes place between theoria and poiesis serves to inform praxis rather than praxis being an equal partner in the relationship. The mission practices of King's Church prioritise theoria – the dialogue with poiesis and praxis is limited because theoria is so dominant. Of both churches Sanctus1 has the greatest potential to engage in a trialogical relationship, as its ideology does not currently preclude this from happening.

6.6: Final Comments

There are many points of learning in this research. It has been helpful to look at two church congregations within one city centre that have such radically different approaches to mission. This reflects the broad nature of contemporary ecclesiology and hence the understanding and practices of mission. Within this study I have learnt about the importance of boundaries in defining both ecclesiology and mission practices. When a boundary is tightly defined it appears that the practice of the mission is concerned primarily with getting people to cross a boundary into a church and taking up church membership. If the success of mission is defined narrowly in terms of church membership, then King's Church's approach to mission is very successful. However, when mission is defined more broadly and the boundary is more

fluid, an ecclesiology emerges that is looser in nature. This creates space for more creative mission practices to emerge, as well as mission practices that are more contextual and arguably more in-tune with the *missio Dei.* Mission therefore becomes an activity that is not about getting people to join a church, but is rather about affirming that God is active in the world and joining in. Whilst the *missio Dei* has become increasingly central within contemporary theology, my research can point to the fact that this is not manifest in the ecclesiology or mission practices of King's Church.

The area that I am most excited about for future use is how poiesis intersects with practical theology. The growing interest in contemporary art can be seen as an example of people finding meaning through poiesis, which is an area that I intend to explore more informally in the future as I look to apply the learning from this research to particular contexts and communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sanctus1 Values

As a Christian community, Sanctus1 is made up of people who are either committed to, or are exploring a journey into, a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and with one another. We recognise God's indefinable presence in music, film, arts and other key areas of contemporary culture. As a community we have shared values: welcoming, serving, rooted and missional:

Welcoming – In response to Christ's welcome, Sanctus1 aims to be welcoming to all people. We therefore aim to reflect a diversity of theology and experience from all walks of life.

Serving – Our community is able to function and flourish by following the example of Jesus, who served others.

Rooted – Sanctus1 is a Christian community which interacts with the Bible as we recognise God’s unique presence within it. We draw from a rich vein of Christian tradition across denominations, including the Nicene Creed.

Missional – We believe that God is already active in our world, and we aim to join with God in God’s ongoing mission. This means we are engaged in the changes happening in Manchester and the wider world.